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THE MORNING LAND.

THE MORNING LAND.

BY

EDWARD DICEY,

LATE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" IN THE EAST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

FOR LIB

London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1870.

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R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

TO THE READER.

At the close of last September I left Paris for Constantinople, *viâ* the Danube. On Christmas Day I landed at Marseilles, on my return from Alexandria. During these three months I visited Turkey, the Holy Land, and Egypt, under circumstances of somewhat exceptional interest. An invitation to be present at the opening of the Suez Canal was the immediate cause of my journey. But I made it my object also to see as much of the Morning Land, of whose marvels the canal across the Isthmus is only the least and latest, as time and opportunity would permit. The result of my observations was communicated to the journal I then represented, in a series of letters, which I now give to the public in a collected form. That many of these letters were written in great haste, under circumstances of extreme difficulty, and with scant time for testing the impression of the moment by careful reflection, is a fact of which nobody can be so well aware as I who wrote them. But yet—speaking not so much of my own epistles as of the class to which they belong—I hold that the descriptions of special correspondents have a distinct

value of their own. To know a foreign country well is a task requiring long years of residence and serious study. And this, no doubt, is more especially true of countries where the language, faith, civilization of the land, are alien to those of the looker-on. The passing tourist, however, cannot hope to see more than the external aspect of a strange country; and paradoxical as the statement may seem, his first impressions are, I believe, more valuable than his second or third ones. A traveller, judging from my own experience, becomes so rapidly familiarized with the aspect of objects by which he is surrounded for any length of time, that he loses all sense of their novelty; and with the loss of this sense, he loses also the power of conveying to others any portraiture of their external semblance. If my theory is right, the very merit of special correspondence literature consists in the fact that it is the record of impressions described almost as soon as they are produced upon the observer's mind. Such descriptions are not oil paintings, but pencil sketches. Paintings, as works of art, rank superior to sketches; but a good sketch is worth more than a bad picture. Under what category of literature these letters of mine may come it is not for me to determine. I give them to the public for what they are worth, as sketches of the MORNING LAND.

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THE MORNING LAND.

THE IRON GATES.

ORSOVA, *October* 2.

THE paddle-wheels of Lloyd's steamer, the *Mercury*, send a throb with each turn through the long narrow steamship as we glide down the Danube in the darkness of the night. As I write, we are passing between Bulgaria and Wallachia, but we might be sailing between Essex and Kent for anything we can see of the low black shores on either side. For the last thirty hours I have been travelling East, due East, as fast—it would be more true, but less poetical, to say as slowly—as rail and steam could carry me. During that time I have traversed the whole length of Hungary. I have skirted Servia and Transylvania. I am now sailing on Turkish waters. Yet, when I seek to recall the scenes I have passed through, my recollections are vague and shadowy. Oftentimes, on journeys

like this, I am tempted to doubt whether there is much truth in the popular assertion that steam makes the world better acquainted. In the old-fashioned days of diligences, vetturini, and "speed-waggons"—falsely so called—you went over much less ground, but you saw what you did see far more thoroughly. One hour's jog-trot over a high-road would have shown me more of the real life of the strange district I have traversed than my two days' rapid travel. Still, you must take the world as you find it; and, if you want nowadays to get to Constantinople, you must go by the Kaiser-Ferdinand-Nord-Bahn and the Danube steamers. Let me try to bring back some of the impressions left upon my mental retina by the series of views which I have looked upon from my carriage and cabin windows.

All round Vienna the country is one of the best cultivated, prosperous, and homelike you will see in any land with which I am acquainted. To describe the look of that pleasant Austrian land, the German word "Gemüthlich"—the interpretation of which lies somewhere between "livable" and "lovable"—must needs have been invented, if it did not already exist. A score of miles beyond the Kaiserstadt, in your journey eastwards, you cross a narrow stream running through high banks of sand, a world too wide for its scanty current, and you find yourself in Hun-

gary, in "a dry and barren land, where no water is." I don't say that Hungary is not really fertile and rich in the fruits of the earth; the evidence of statistics might possibly contradict me if I did. All I do say is that, from the railway-carriage window point of view, it is the dreariest and most desolate of countries. Whatever sunlight and a blue, cloudless sky could give of cheeriness to the scene was given yesterday; but, for all that, nothing could give colour to those endless, flat, dun plains. Hedges there were none; the harvest had been gathered in; and one field was distinguished from the other only by the different hues of the stubble. Every now and then, at very long intervals, you crossed a military post-road; but cross-roads were not to be seen, and their places were supplied by rough tracks over the fields, along which carts of the most primitive kind, framed of long poles swung between high wheels, crawled slowly. Oxen, goaded on with iron-tipped poles by rough sheepskin-clad peasants, might be seen from time to time dragging huge wooden rollers over rough-ploughed patches of sandy soil; and ever and anon gangs of women, distinguishable, as the train shot past, from their male fellow-labourers by the gaudy colours of their striped petticoats, were caught sight of gathering up bundles of the withered maize-stocks.

But indeed the signs of agricultural labour—at this season of the year at any rate—were few and far between. For the most part, we travelled on and on through the endless rolling plains, bare as the prairie, but without the grandeur of its unbroken expanse of green level sward, with little trace of human dwellings, not to speak of human industry. Great herds of cattle could be seen lying crowded in the patches of shadow to be found beneath the hillocks, out of the glare of the blazing sunlight. Troops of horses running loose, and to all appearance untended, galloped away into the distance as our train came rattling by; gangs of pigs, followed by barefooted swineherds, lay wallowing by every pool of muddy water. The trim château-like Austrian stations had vanished, and had given place to low, one-storeyed, whitewashed, thatched sheds, with trees between them and the track, which seemed—like the inn at Upware, on the Cam—to be any number of miles from anywhere. Groups of grave, sallow men, with high betasselled top-boots, braided coats, and black woollen skull-caps, bearing a striking family resemblance to the Count in the "Stranger" as known to provincial theatres, loitered about the platform, under an apparently unfounded impression that somebody they knew might arrive by the train. The "restaurations,"

where, at every Austrian station, the good people of the Fatherland drink beer of the best and devour not unsavoury *butter-brods*, had vanished like "Hans Breitman's barty;" and the only supply of refreshment of any kind was provided by ragged urchins, who offered mouldy grapes, and muddy water from earthen pitchers. With each station you stopped at the sound of the German tongue became less and less frequent; and the placards on the walls were inscribed in that mysterious Magyar language whose only guiding principle, so far as an uninitiated observer can judge, is to throw *x*'s and *y*'s and *z*'s higgledy-piggledy into every word, which, without their presence, might have been pronounceable by ordinary lips.

Let me say, in passing, that all persons I met with travelling, native or foreigner, assured me that the material progress of Hungary had been immense during the last three years. I am quite willing to believe it. The side rails at all the stations were crowded with long trains of heavily-laden trucks, working their way slowly Viennawards along the over-blocked line. At all the few roadside crossings there were teams of carts and carriages waiting for our train to pass; and in the distance I saw several tall chimneys belching forth black pillars of smoke through the still sultry air—a sight which told of manu-

facturing industry. And I fancied—it may have been only fancy—that the people looked brighter and less forlorn than when I saw them last, in the days when between Hungary and Austria there were bitter hatred, oppression, and wrong. But long years must pass away before, to the traveller's eye, the land of the Magyars ceases to be anything else than dreary and desolate.

It was night before we reached Pesth; and in the morning, when the sun rose over the dead distance, bringing the daybreak with it, we were within sight of the hills which bound the Danube valley. Through long tracts of marshy land, where the weeds grow high and rank, we passed slowly on to the river-side, and there, at a wharf, the railroad and our land journey came to an end together. The steamer was in waiting, with her steam up, to take us to the entrance of the Iron Gates; and—to the credit of the world's progress be it spoken—even in those outlying districts the delay and weariness of passports and custom-houses have been pretty well done away with. Of all river steamers I have travelled in, excepting those between New York and Newport, the Austrian Lloyds are the best; while, so far as living is concerned, there is not an hotel in the United States where you are fed so well as in these Danube steamers, the price of your food being

included in your ticket. I know, too, of no mode of conveyance where you meet with such a strange assortment of humanity. I have no reason to suppose that the crowd now borne along in the cabins of the *Mercury* is especially varied, yet any number of nationalities are represented in it. To give rank its due, we have on board Djemil Pacha, the Turkish Minister at Paris, and Rustum Bey, the representative of the Porte at Florence, on their way to Constantinople, to be in readiness for the Empress's arrival. Amongst our passengers there are a score of travelled Turks going homewards. They correspond but little with one's traditional idea of the haughty Moslem—quiet, grave men, who look somehow as if they never could have been young at any time. We have a little boy Pacha on board, with an English governess, who—the boy I mean, not the lady—looks like the image of a dwarf Turk, with the lines already marked upon his smooth childish face where the wrinkles and crowsfeet are to be. The Turks all wear the fez, but other sign of outward Moslemism they have none. The more strict of the party dined apart, but on their tables I saw long-necked bottles. They may have contained lemonade, but, in all my experience of beverages, I never yet saw lemonade enclosed in bottles corked with silver foil. Next in importance to the Pachas, we have

two English members of Parliament—Mr. Candlish and Mr. Beaumont—who are going out to India, *viâ* the Bosphorus and the Red Sea, to inquire into the causes of the excessive expenditure in the Abyssinian campaign.

Then, among the minor notabilities, we have any number of passengers journeying to those strange border-lands where people go for the sake of making money to spend at home. There is the proprietress of a French "Magasin de Modes" at Bucharest, who has been to Paris to secure the services of two "first hands," whom she is bearing back decked out with ribbons, like recruits just enlisted. There is a *commis voyageur* in the hair trade, who has boxfuls of chignons, which he hopes to dispose of at high prices to the ladies of Roumania, and to replace by locks purchased at low rates from the peasant girls of the Principalities; said locks to be made up at Paris, and to be sold again to the wealthy countrywomen of the original owners. We have half-a-dozen grass widows, who have been to the West on furlough, and are now returning to spend the winter with their husbands, who are settled in business in the East. We are honoured by the presence of the landladies of hotels upon the Black Sea, of Russian officials going to Odessa, of German tutors, of railway contractors, of financial agents, and bagmen innumerable. At our *table*

d'hôte there is a very Babel of languages—English, French, German, Turkish, Hungarian, Serbian, and Greek; the latter four I take upon credit. One unknown tongue sounds very like another; and the only language I can catch at all is the Rouman, in which Italian words recur so constantly, that you are always under the delusion you are going to understand the next sentence that is spoken.

All day long, till the evening closed in, we sailed down, in a small tug about the size of a Thames penny boat, through the gorge of the Iron Gates. If I remember rightly, there was a stipulation in the Treaty of Paris in 1856, that the Danube was to be rendered navigable along the rapids, and a loan for that purpose was guaranteed by somebody to somebody. If so, the expenditure was about as productive as the rest of the millions which the allied Powers spent on the Crimean war. The Danube from Drenkova to Orsova—that is, for about six hours' journey down a rapid stream—is still to be traversed only by boats of very shallow draught, and not always even by them. Even to-day, at the narrowest and rapidest of the three defiles, a long string of carriages, or rather carts, was in waiting on the banks at the commencement of the gorge, in the hope that the *Busy Bee* or *Active Ant*, or whatever the names of our little tugs may have been, would not be able to cross

the rapids, and would consequently have to disembark us; and, as I was told by the steward that these carriages came down every day on the chance, I felt indisposed to believe his further assertion that their services were hardly ever wanted.

Apart from the injury which the lack of transit inflicts upon the merchant trade of the Danube, it also throws difficulties in the way of the sail down the river as a route for tourists. Had it been cold or rainy, our journey to-day would have been miserable—as it was, we were only broiled with the heat. So much has been said about the Iron Gates, and the comparatively few tourists who have seen them are so apt to brag about the spectacle, as about anything which ordinary travellers have not seen, that I had expected a good deal more than I found. In no part of the route is there anything so grand or so precipitous as the entrance to the Rhine at Bingen; and at their best the gorges of the Iron Gateways bear a close resemblance to the Avon at Clifton. As to shooting the rapids, there is nothing of the kind. By the ripple in the waters at certain points you can tell that there must be rocks underneath, and the zigzag winding course you have to follow, marked out as it is by piles and buoys in mid-stream, shows clearly enough that the channel must be

obstructed underneath the surface; but there is no apparent fall in the current, and you can hardly tell that you are going more quickly at one moment than at another. Nor is there much of variety in the scenery you traverse. You pass from one lake-like reach of the river, hemmed in by low wood-covered hills, to another, and every few miles the hills grow somewhat steeper, and the stone cliffs are no longer hidden from view by the forest trees; and then you are told that you are passing through an Iron Gate.

To my mind, the most striking feature of the voyage was the solitude of the country, as seen from the deck of the steamer. The title of the "Silent Highway" might fairly be claimed by the Danube. Along the Austrian shore there runs a good post-road; but, with the exception of a few peasant carts, I saw no trace of traffic over it. In none of the valleys which run down to the river were there, so far as I could see, cross-roads leading to the main route. During our journey we stopped twice alongside barges moored in the stream as wharves, with a fort alongside, where half-a-dozen Austrian soldiers lounged listlessly; but we neither dropped nor took in passengers, and all day long we scarcely came in sight of half-a-dozen villages. Indeed, after a time, the monotony of the voyage became wearisome. Flocks of wild ducks skimming

rapidly over our heads, herds of goats and cattle standing knee-deep in the stream, or basking upon the banks under the shelter of the trees; a raft or two, worked by wild-looking men, floating slowly down the current; a tug panting painfully up stream with a number of barges fastened to its stern; a group of armed peasants straggling along the high road; a crowd of sunburnt, bronzed beggar lads, with nothing on them save a sheepskin jacket, waving to and fro as they shouted and tossed their bare arms without apparent cause; a half-ruined fort over which the Turkish flag drooped languidly in the still air, and a company of Ottoman soldiers with baggy trousers, who presented arms to the steamer as we sailed by—these are about all the breaks I can recall to the monotonous uniformity of our long river sail.

Then, at last, just as the sun has set and the darkness has come on, we shoot through a labyrinth of rocks which really do show their heads above the water. Our little boat tosses about manfully in the swell created by the breakers; and at last we are again on the broad placid Danube stream, alongside the steamer which is to carry us to Varna.

THE LOWER DANUBE.

RUSTCHUK, *October* 8.

ALL readers of Goethe, and scores of people to whom "Wilhelm Meister" is a sealed book, have felt the pathos of Mignon's song, "Kennst Du das Land;" and even those to whom the words are unknown must realize something of its beauty when they look on that most hackneyed and yet most beautiful of Ary Scheffer's pictures, "Mignon regrettant sa patrie." But the full beauty of that outburst of regret for the fair, sunlit, half-forgotten southern land of the Wandering Singing Girl's birth can, I think, be understood only by those whose lot bids them dwell in our cold, colourless northern climes, with the knowledge that there are other lands where the sky is always blue, and the air is bright, and to live is in itself a pleasure. I claim no particular resemblance to the lovesick child of the Blind Harper; and I confess to a belief that there are very few things in poetry which might not be said as well, or better, in prose. But I own that whenever I come

back, as I have this day, to these glorious southern lands,—where the sky is clear from clouds, where trees there are few or none, the hill-sides are bare and sharp, the houses sparkle in the distance, and the hues of every object on which you gaze are clear in outline, rich, and vivid,—the words of Mignon's song come unbidden to my memory.

It was so this morning when I came out of my cabin into the clear morning air, just tinged by warmth at early sunrise. During the night we had passed from the north into the south—from the land of green and haze and blurred soft horizons, into the land of blue and colour and hard naked outlines. The foreground seems scarcely nearer than the far distance; the hill-side miles away is as distinct as the river's banks; there is light and warmth and colour everywhere. I admit that the overland route to Constantinople is badly managed, that the journey across Germany and Hungary is unutterably tedious, and that the Iron Gates themselves are scarcely worth going out of your way to see; but the whole toil and trouble of the journey is to my mind repaid by the morning sail down the Lower Danube. The river has widened out into a broad grand expanse of water floating lazily and languidly towards the sea; the hills have sunk down; trees have disappeared,

with the exception of low thickets of scrubby brushwood dotting the bare hillsides. On the north are the low flat plains of Wallachia; on the south the sandy cliffs of Bulgaria, surmounted at intervals of a mile by the whitewashed square block-houses where the Turkish sentries are supposed to keep watch over the plains which stretch across the river to the Russian frontiers. I don't know that if you analysed it you would find in the scene many of the ingredients of natural beauty; but the sunlight gives colour to everything it touches; every roadside hovel frames itself into a nature-arranged picture; every peasant you see might be a model for an artist's studio; every dress seems to be fitted for an operatic scene. Our vessel moors alongside a Bulgarian cottage; we see, rising up the hill slope, in a sort of semicircular arena, tier upon tier of hovels and haystacks. Where the one begins and the other ends it is impossible to say, hovels and haystacks are so soldered in together. If you were on shore, the filth and squalor of the whole place would doubtless be intolerable. As it is, instinct tells you it must be the abode of every sort of human and animal vermin; and yet, looking on it from the river, you cannot fail to be struck by the beauty of the scene. Moored along the quay, or rather the mud mound which

does duty for a quay, are a score or so of Turkish vessels. I had fancied that such vessels existed only in old-world pictures. I have a notion that their name was Caravels. The deck is crescent-shaped, the stern and the prows running up from the flat, low midships at so steep an angle that if you began to run down from the poop you could hardly stop yourself before you were carried over the bowsprit by the impetus of your descent. The hulls are painted with gaudy colours, something like the sides of a Chinese tea-chest; the dark, sun-bleached sails are set, though the ship lies moored and still; strange corsair figures lie sleeping on the decks; and the flotilla seems fit only to sail forth in some pageant of the days when the rovers scoured the sea. In the river, large droves of black buffaloes, with rope harness round their heads, are standing placidly, or wallowing slowly in the thick brown mire. On the banks there is an encampment formed by the wooden carts to which these oxen belong. The whole population of the village has come down to stare at the steamboat; and there, by the river-side, on trunks of trees, mud-heaps, and bare ground, they squat, staring placidly, each one a picture by himself. On the stream, at every turn, we pass vessels of many lands, lying at anchor, or floating slowly with the stream, waiting for a breath of

air to swell their flapping sails. The water is so calm and still that you can see the taper masts, the dark hulls, and the quaint rigging reflected downwards in the water as bright and vivid as the originals from which the reflection comes. Every now and then a great heron rises from the water-side, and sails slowly away as we pass. A Frenchman on board takes two shots at the bird, and, I am glad to say, misses him; and the report of the gun does not disturb for one moment the slow stateliness of his flight. The air is still; but our movement, as we glide swiftly on, creates a faint breeze, and we sit on the hurricane-deck under the heavy canvas awning, watching the banks steal past us as we pass onwards. Even the Turks look comparatively cheerful, and the pepper-and-salt suits have been discarded for more orthodox black trousers and frock-coats.

As I have mentioned, amongst our passengers we had the Turkish Minister at Paris. His arrival had been telegraphed beforehand; and when we approached Rustchuk, we could see a body of troops drawn up to meet us. The quay was lined with soldiers, who all presented arms; the band played the Turkish march; wild-looking cavalry rode to and fro behind the infantry; and the landing-pier was crowded with stout gentlemen in

baggy trousers and black coats, who, from the orders on their breasts, appeared to be local dignitaries or officers of the garrison. The moment his Excellency landed, before even he could set foot on shore, a rush was made by this crowd of officials to do honour to the great man. I suppose the degree of obeisance was regulated by etiquette; but, looking from the boat, the struggle between the actors in the reception seemed to be which should stoop the lowest or bend the farthest. Some touched the Ambassador's shoes, and knees, and hands; others contented themselves with bowing their foreheads to the ground; but one and all exhibited an amount of servile deference which, on the part of elderly, grave men, jarred somehow upon my Western feelings. However, our Pacha, who is known in the West as one of the most quiet and high-bred Orientals, and who knows England and English as well as any foreigner I have ever met, took it all as one to the manner born, and kissed any number of his brother officials with apparent gusto. As soon as he had landed, the guns from the old fort fired a salute, the Pacha entered an open carriage which had been brought down for him on purpose, the cavalry formed behind the carriage, and the whole procession moved off with all due pomp and state.

As usual the boat arrived too late for the train to Varna. Advertised to start at eleven, it waits till two for the arrival of the steamboat, and even then has generally to set off without it. The consequence is that, as there are no trains to Varna till the following morning, passengers have to pass a night at Rustchuk at no small expense, and with the chance of considerable discomfort. There is one small tavern hotel near the station; and what accommodation it could afford was completely taken up by the half-dozen passengers who got out at Rustchuk.

Personally, however, it would be ungrateful of me to complain. Bad quarters have long ceased to trouble me; and all the afternoon I have spent sitting in the balcony in front of our hotel, looking over the Danube. At the foot of the cliff on whose brow our little caravanserai is seated, the great broad river rolls; and far away into the distance there stretch the broad, flat plains of Wallachia. The white houses of Giurgevo—the most southernly point, if I remember rightly, reached by the Russians after they crossed the Pruth—glimmer and glisten in the sunlight, the little ferry steamers ply to and fro, and well-nigh every person who passes across the stretch of road out upon which I look is of the East, Eastern. Young Turkish *viveurs* come galloping up to the Locanda on horseback

to drink German beer. A Bulgarian lady saunters by, with parasol and chignon, and bows behind her waist, in latest Parisian fashion, followed by a peasant waiting-woman, with a white kerchief bound round her head, and a bright green dressing-gown jacket, of the kind which Robin Hood wore, if artists are right, in Nottingham forests. A railway porter comes up from the station, with a red sash bound round his waist, wherein are stuck four silver-mounted pistols and a dagger or two. Beggar women crawl by with veils over their wrinkled faces; and in the bare patch of ground, with its dwarf shrubs and wooden benches, which is supposed to represent a German Lust-garten, there is the constant hum and buzz of insect life. The sun sets, and the lights glance forth at once like glowworms from the houses on the Wallachian shore; and I suppose, from the minaret of Rustchuk hard by, I might hear the faithful called to prayer. I don't, as a matter of fact; but I might, or think I might, and that suffices me.

ACROSS BULGARIA.

GALATA, *October* 5.

ONE hundred and eighty divided by thirteen gives, according to Cocker, fourteen, within a fraction. The second of these two numbers is that of the years which have elapsed since the Crimean war; the first is the total of miles of railroad constructed up to the present date within Turkey in Europe. It follows, therefore, that an average of fourteen miles per annum is all that the Ottoman Empire has contributed to the vast network of railways with which the face of Europe has been covered since the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris. Any number of railroads have been projected; concessions have been obtained for many more; for some few estimates and surveys have actually been made. At the present moment—as, indeed, at any time for many a year past—the Porte is engaged in financial negotiations for the construction of a grand trunk line between Constantinople and Vienna—a line which is to pass

through Adrianople, to cross the Balkan, and then to traverse Bosnia to the Austrian frontiers, and which is estimated to cost five hundred millions of francs. This is only one of the schemes on foot for throwing open European Turkey to the West. Meanwhile all that has been actually effected consists of two lines, one from Varna to Rustchuk, of one hundred and forty miles, and one from Kustendje to Tchernavoda, of forty. Over the longer of the two—that is, over the one important railroad now existing in European Turkey —I have just passed; and I confess my observation has not led me to the conclusion that in this case it is only *le premier pas qui coûte.* The railroad is, or at any rate ought to be, part of the chief through route, for the time being, between the Bosphorus and the West. It is, and has been for some time, in full working order, and yet its position is pitiable even in comparison with that of the London, Chatham, and Dover. If I were told that I had been left a legacy of railway shares, name unknown, I should know by intuition that they must be shares in the Varna Railroad. This unfortunate line passes through Bulgaria, which we are always told at home is the most prosperous portion of the Christian provinces of Turkey; and leaving aside certain slight defects in construction,

which, considering the amount of traffic to be conveyed are of comparatively little importance, the line would do well enough, but for one objection, and that is that it has neither passengers nor freight. Rustchuk and Varna, the two termini of the railroad, are small towns of twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants; except on the days when the fast trains run, there is no particular reason why people should go from one to the other; and as people never travel at all in Turkey without some strong inducement, they do not travel between the Danube and the Black Sea for the benefit of the company. The eight stations on the line are feeders for as many villages. There are no cross-roads to bring passengers to the line; and during my journey yesterday I could not observe that a dozen passengers either got in or out during our whole hundred and forty miles of transit. I have no doubt that freight traffic might be developed if the country had roads, and if there were any port at Varna where vessels could land their cargoes in safety. But failing these conditions, which are not likely to be fulfilled for many a year, the freight is as meagre as the tally of local passengers. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the receipts should be small. There has been a dispute concerning the pecuniary arrangements contracted by the company with the Turkish

Government, into the merits of which I have neither the desire nor the knowledge to enter. The one thing which is admitted is, that the money expected from the Porte is not forthcoming, that the traffic barely pays the working expenses of the line, and that the wages of the servants employed in the service of the company are in arrears. How far this position of affairs may have been due to any mismanagement on the part of either company or Government, I do not pretend to say. But the one clear lesson of the Varna and Rustchuk Railroad is, that foreigners are unwise to invest their money in the construction of Turkish railroads; and as Turkey has only contrived to make her two European lines by the aid of foreign capital and industry, I should say that the prospect of the country's being soon supplied with railroads is by no means encouraging.

Perhaps, however, it is ungrateful to speak ill of a line that carried me safely, though not speedily. In little under ten hours we accomplished one hundred and forty miles. The day was broiling hot, the carriage was crowded, the pace was slow, the stoppages were long, and—except to a traveller to whom the East was new—there was little to attract notice in the scenery through which we passed. The moment we had lost sight of the

Danube, we entered upon a broken, rolling country, looking something like the surface of an earth-sea sinking into calm after a storm had died away; and earth-wave succeeded earth-wave until we reached the coast. At long intervals in the distance we saw a collection of whitewashed, mud-built huts, which we were told were Bulgarian villages. Twice we passed close alongside these quaint hovel camps, in the midst of which children, and pigs, and fowls clustered together in common filth. On the bare hill-sides, half enclosed by broken-down osier fences, we saw graveyard after graveyard filled with stones, of which about a tenth stood upright, while the remaining nine-tenths lay scattered about the ground at every variety of angle; and less often, as it seemed to me, we saw little groups of peasants working in the fields. About the very hottest of the sultry afternoon, a sudden fresh breeze coming from the East told us we were nearing the sea; and then, through reedy marshes, and by the side of long lakes, we passed down towards the coast. The names of the little roadside stations of Shumla and Gubidje recalled the old Crimean days when Varna was a household word only too bitterly remembered in English homes.

On the horizon, as we descend slowly into Varna, we see

the hulls of ships rising above the narrow belt of sand which separates the Lake of Diona, whose shores we have been skirting, from the sea. But the coast hereabouts is so flat that it is not until we actually reach the port that we see the sea sparkling before our eyes. The Black Sea seems an ill-fitting name for that broad expanse of dark blue water over which the tiny rivulets ripple so merrily. The train takes us down to the water's edge. But though the sea is calm, the steamer lies out in the offing, and we have to embark in little boats to reach her. In rough weather you cannot land at all at Varna; and when there is the least swell, the disembarkation is a very unpleasant and not altogether safe operation. Some day or other Varna is to be converted into a splendid harbour. The scheme has been under consideration for years upon years; and one-hundredth part of the energy which has completed the Suez Canal would have opened a channel between the lake and the sea, and thereby provided Turkey with a magnificent harbour of refuge on the Bulgarian coast. However, nothing has been done, and Varna remains stone for stone what it was when the English troops were encamped on the slopes of the pleasant breezy-looking hill which overhangs the lake. It seems hard indeed to associate the idea of fever and sickness with the brisk

fresh air which fans our faces so pleasantly after the heat of the day.

At Varna, as at every halting-place of any importance along our route, there is a gathering of officials to pay their respects in person to their Excellencies Djemil Pacha and Rustum Bey, the Ambassadors of whom I have before made mention. The illustrious travellers have a state carriage provided for them: and, indeed, they and their suites make up five-sixths of the train's way-bill of passengers. I only hope, for the sake of the traffic returns, that they have not a right of free transit over the line! Six shabby-looking soldiers of as many different heights stand in front of the ambassadorial carriage, with curved swords, something like reaping-hooks, held upright before their breasts. Salaaming and embracing go on as before. Everybody declares by word and gesture that he is everybody else's most humble slave; the guns of the fort fire a salute; a visit of courtesy has to be paid to the Pacha; and the result is, that the darkness has set in long before the last boat-load of red-fezzed officials has quitted the *Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian*, the Lloyds steamer which is to carry us to the Bosphorus; and which, by the way, has already been waiting some thirty hours at Varna for the arrival of our train.

Still I must own that to me the delay was not altogether wearisome. I could have looked for twice as long on the spectacle which the decks afforded. There, for the first time, I saw something of true Turkish life. Our steamer had a raised stern deck, towards the middle of which stood a kind of coop which covered the entrances to the companion ladder. Between this coop and the bulwarks a pen was marked out by wooden railings, of the sort that you see at the top of staircases in English homes, where there are little children in the family; and inside this pen there were stowed the Turkish lady passengers. A piece of quilt-work was hung up between the deck and the pen, partly to shelter the inmates from the wind, but mainly to keep up a kind of fiction that they were secluded from vulgar eyes. But the fiction was as transparent as the veils worn by the women. There was nothing apparently, except your own good breeding, to hinder you from going and leaning over the railings of the pen, and staring at the women as if they had been so many pigs enclosed in a stall at the Agricultural Hall. Possibly, if you had stared with peculiar intentness for any length of time at any particular lady, you might have seen a Turk scowling at you from under his heavy eyebrows; and if you had prolonged your stare notwithstanding, I fancy you might have been in-

formed by one of the waiters that it was not customary to look at the passengers in the ladies' pen. But without outraging any of the proprieties, and without doing anything to affront the susceptibilities of the most umbrageous of Ottomans, it was possible to look down upon the improvised harem from any point of the paddle-boxes and the upper deck. It may have been reprehensible, but I looked: and in justice to myself I may state that I looked long after the most cursory glance had assured me there was nothing to be seen but a score or so of elderly and singularly unattractive women. They were all dressed alike. Round their foreheads and across their chins were bound folds of white muslin. The result was that the eyes and nose were alone exposed to the air. Still, the muslin was so thin that you could see the colour and outline of the face beneath distinctly enough; whilst many of the dames—especially the younger ones—had drawn their veils so high over their eyebrows, and so low under their noses, that well-nigh the whole face was visible. In outward garb they were all attired alike: each of them had a sort of long cape wrapper, made of some very coarse poor silk, hanging from the shoulders to the feet. What may have been under the wrapper, I know not. To the untrained spectator's eye, the wrapper-covered figures were bundles without form or

shape of any kind. Underneath the skirt of the cape, whether the ladies stood or sat, there peeped out feet encased in large yellow slippers, generally stockingless, or, when provided with such articles, with stockings down at heel. The wrappers, I should add, were of many colours—green, brown, yellow, and blue—but all dingy and sad in hue. Carpets—or rather pieces of carpet, such as you see in bachelors' bed-rooms in poorly-furnished English homes—were placed on the floor of the pen, one for each passenger; and on the side there was a heap of quilted counterpanes, in which they could wrap themselves up at night. I gathered that if the ladies had done exactly what they were bidden to do by their lords and masters, they would have sat with their faces against the bulwarks of the ship, so that their shapeless figures would alone have been visible to the public gaze; and I noticed that one venerable and hard-featured dame, whose face was more wrinkled than those of her companions, kept constantly nudging the others when they fell out of line, and turned their faces towards the deck. But there always was some excuse, either in the motion of the ship, or in the direction of the wind, for changing their position; and, during the early part of the voyage, the ladies of the harem certainly looked a good deal more at the passengers than the passengers

looked at them. As a rule, they sat cross-legged upon the ground; and when they were not munching something or other, which was not often the case, they kept up a continual chatter. People speaking quickly in an unknown tongue always seem to an outsider to be quarrelling; and so I may wrong my female fellow-travellers by the suspicion that they had occasional tiffs during the voyage. I know, however, I saw them shove each other pretty often; and a black negro slave girl, who was in attendance upon the stoutest of the stout bundles, must have had a pretty hard time of it, in the constant call for her services to re-arrange her mistress's wraps and cushions. A little Turkish boy of six or seven years old—the child of one of the women—was passed over the railings occasionally as a messenger between the pen and the outer world of the deck whereon the husbands sat and smoked. Every now and then one of the more affectionate spouses went up to the side of the enclosure and spoke to his wife, or wives, as the case might be; and when it became dark, and the unbelievers came up on deck after dinner, the company of husbands ranged themselves on chairs in a semicircle about the pen, so as to keep up a kind of cordon round the sacred enclosure, and in these chairs they dozed and kept guard till daybreak. The night was very warm, and the

sea was as smooth as glass. I plead guilty to having entertained a malicious desire for a short, sharp gale of wind and rain. As a study of human nature, I should have liked to see whether the Turkish husbands would have stuck to their posts in spite of wind and waves. Jealousy may be the strongest of human passions, but can it resist the influence of bile churned the wrong way? I doubt it. Even Othello himself would have forgotten all about Cassio if he had been sea-sick. A basin, I fancy, somehow drowns all other earthly cares.

However, the sea was like a mill-pond, and when, at daybreak, I came on deck to see the entrance to the Bosphorus, I found the harem and its guardians in exactly the same position as I had left them overnight. And now I should begin to describe the glories of the Bosphorus. So I should, but for the one reason, that I did not see them. Possibly the reason is not a good one, but it happens to be true. From the time we left the Black Sea to that when we reached Galata, we steamed through a hot, damp mist which would have done credit to Wapping.

THE BOSPHORUS.

THERAPIA, *October 6.*

A GREAT many years ago there was a panorama of Constantinople at Burford's, in Leicester Square. Burford's is a name that conveys no meaning to the rising generation. Little boys, out for a holiday, are no longer taken to see panoramas, a mercy for which, in their ignorance, they are doubtless not sufficiently thankful. Panoramas, in fact, are played out. They were in their sere and yellow leaf when I went to see the pictorial view of Istamboul. It was my fate to have seen many of these instructive exhibitions, and this particular panorama, like its predecessors, would have left no special impression on my mind beyond a general sense of dreary dulness, but for an accidental circumstance. Close behind the two hills which encircle the city there rose—*in the picture* —a high range of snow-peaked Alps. It was the first day of the opening, and the exhibitor had not got his lecture very glibly by rote. However, he had made a

good start. He had got us safe to the Mosque of St. Sophia, "built Hanno Domini 325, by the Hemperor Constantine, rebuilt in 425 by Theodosius II.," and so on, when suddenly a little girl, about six years old, called out, in a shrill treble voice, "Please, sir, what is the name of those mountains in the back?" The showman stopped, stammered, and at last replied, "They haven't got no name, miss; they're mountains without a name." And then, dropping the subject, he recommenced with, "rebuilt in 425 by Theodosius II." But beyond that he could not get, and, after stuttering incoherently for some time, he turned to the audience, and said, "Ladies and gentlemen,—You must excuse my going back to the beginning. I can't remember what I have to say unless I start fair; and please don't let nobody interrupt me again." He did go back, beginning from the Seraglio Point, and nobody interrupted him till he was safely landed on the Cyanean Rocks, "the scene of the classical legend of the Hargonaut." The incident has always remained in my mind as a cogent illustration of the mental process by which memory works. But it was only since I came here the other day that I understood how it chanced that the precocious schoolgirl's question had floored the unhappy exhibitor.

The mountains had no name, because they did not exist, and they had been brought forward in the view of Constantinople by the artist, who, I fear, cared more about the exigencies of art than the interests of abstract truth. This near range of snow-capped Alps is the one thing needed to complete the beauty of the view from the Bosphorus; and, notwithstanding the Art-Evangel of Mr. Ruskin, and the advocates of truth unadorned, I think that Mr. Burford's artist understood his business when he threw in a range of Alps by way of background. For the truth is, that the first aspect of the City of the Golden Horn is, to my mind, somewhat disappointing. It may be that so much has been said about the view, the reality can hardly equal the expectation; but there is, I think, a certain disproportionateness between the length and the height of the low hill-slopes on which Istamboul and Pera lie nestled that jars upon the eye. Naples would be always beautiful if the bay were girt in alone by the heights of Sant' Elmo and Sorrento; but she could not be called the loveliest of cities if behind her tiers of terraces there did not rise the cone of Mount Vesuvius, and behind that, again, the jagged heights of the Apennines. Still the exceeding beauty of the Bosphorus atones for every defect in the panorama of Con-

stantinople as it really stands. That beauty no art of word-painting can convey. Nor can any guide-book list of the objects to be noted on the banks give an impression of the depth of hue, the richness of colour. I, for my part, can tell you of the Bosphorus only as I have seen it.

At the Stamboul end of the Bridge of the Sultana Valideh are a quantity of small river steamboats. They are all English built, old-fashioned paddle-wheel boats, of the sort that ply upon the Clyde. But the awnings over their decks, the railed-off partitions, wherein the veiled Turkish women sit huddled together, the red flags with the crescent at their stern, the strange hieroglyphics in which their destination and hour of departure are inscribed on the board affixed to the chimney-ropes, give them a sort of Oriental varnish. The wind is blowing hard from the Black Sea; the sky is covered with dark clouds chasing each other rapidly; the still waters of the Bosphorus are broken by small white crested waves; the gleams of sunshine are few and far between; and our passengers are not many. Still there is always a strange variety in the crowd which I can hardly fancy my ever noting unconsciously. Down the steps comes a Jewish rabbi, with black muslin veil hanging down from his

low-crowned hat, somewhat after the way in which veils are worn by young men coming home from the Derby, when there is no dust, and the veils are put on to look sporting. Behind him steps a dervish, with the green turban which marks him as one of the holy men who have been to Mecca; then a small Negro boy, black as a coal, but without the blubber lips and woolly hair of the orthodox "man and a brother" type. Next follow Turks with chocolate-coloured dressing-gowns; Turks with white turbans and quilted green waistcoats, like what we used to call "Crimean jackets;" Turks with bare feet and red sashes round their waist. Then come English clerks, who have added the fez to their ordinary home attire, under an impression it is the right thing to do; then two Greek ladies, dressed in the height of Parisian fashion; then an old veiled Turkish woman, carrying in her arms a baby Turk, swaddled with rich carpet-stuff of many colours. As we start from the pier two men come running down—one, an elderly Greek, makes a spring and lands on the boat; the other, a young Turk, looks philosophically at the departing steamer and stops behind, affording thereby, I fancy, no bad illustration of the contrast between the rival races.

Pera stretches its monstrous length out before us as

we sail on up stream. Do you know the little toy houses wherewith children of an early age go into the town-building business? They are—or used to be, when I knew of such things—little blocks of wood with a brown roof, a façade of red, yellow, or blue, as the case might be; a large black dab for the door, and three small black dabs above for the windows. And, as paint was thought not to be a wholesome condiment for infant digestion, the side walls and back were left bare, and the colour in front was put on sparingly. Well, if you took any number of these toy houses, and stuck them haphazard upon a bank, you would form a very fair imitation of Pera, as seen at a distance from the Bosphorus. Each wooden house stands alone: you can discover no trace of plan, or road, or system. Every householder has squatted where he thought fit.

We are steaming close in shore. The current is so rapid down the Bosphorus that, to make our way up, especially in the teeth of a strong head-wind, we have to take advantage of the back eddy along the banks; and so we pass within a stone's throw of the houses which overhang the European shore of the Straits for a distance of some ten miles or more. First we skirt a mass of water-side hovels, the like of which I have never seen else-

where. The piles whereon they are built have sunk, and these structures hang together at every kind of angle. Some bulge out over the stream, others fall away toward the shore; some slope like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, others have their sides squeezed in. Pull away one plank of the pile, and the whole mass, as it seems, would come tottering to the ground. The timbers are black with bilge water, rotten with damp, cracked, warped, and worm-eaten. You would have thought a rat of average weight would have been afraid to adventure himself in so tumble-down a fabric; but through the shutterless windows you can see swarms of women and children crouching in the dark mouldy rooms; and, to judge by the signs over the water-logged doorways, all sorts of sordid seafaring trades are carried on within these wretched huts. Not a stone's throw further on, and we come to a row of new palaces, overhanging the river-side. Of architectural beauty there cannot well be much in these two-storeyed rectangular buildings, with their flat roofs and long façades adorned with Corinthian columns and porticoes. But they all have an air of wealth and splendour contrasting strangely with the squalor of the huts alongside. Up the hill slopes there stretch the gardens of the palaces, with their groves of cypresses, live oaks, vines, and olive-trees. There is no

smoke rising from the roofs, no sign of outward life about the place. The palace—it is that of the Sultan Mahmoud —along whose front we are sailing slowly might be that of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, for any token of life or motion. The blinds are all drawn down; they are of that thick canvas make so common in Germany, with figures painted on them through which the light itself penetrates but scantily; and, as if these were not enough, most of the windows are covered with lattice screens which would defy the curiosity of Peeping Tom. The ladies of the harem may see, but they cannot be seen; and, for all that eye can tell, the palace may be empty. A veiled figure is standing at the door, where she has just landed from a caïque, which has brought her to the water steps. The door opens half-way, the lady enters, and there is no chance to catch a glimpse even of the court within.

Then follows a mosque, with its low dome of the Pavilion at Brighton order of architecture; then a dozen palaces, skirting the water's edge; and then, close by, a group of river taverns which might almost have been transplanted bodily from Wapping. Wooden balconies jut out in front of each house, on which stand rows of tables and chairs: and groups of sailors of all nations sit therein smoking, drinking, singing, quarrelling. Then follows a

garden-patch, with a minaret standing amidst cypresses, and towering over a growth of bushy underwood; and then more palaces. Many palaces are now building: some are unfinished, and have obviously been so for years past; others are mere skeletons. But one and all have a tumble-down run-up-for-the-day look about them; the plaster soon stains and peels in these water-splashed river sites; and the cracks and blots stand out clear against the whitewashed boards. Everything seems falling into decay; and the fact that scarce a stone of the many thousands in that fair hill-side burying-ground, which runs down to the water's edge in the very centre of these rows of palaces, is standing upright, is in harmony with the whole character of the scene. Somebody once said that whenever we English leave India we shall leave behind us no trace of our dominion except piles of empty soda-water bottles. How that may be I cannot tell. But whenever the Moslem is driven out of Constantinople he will leave behind him nothing of his own that will last except countless heaps of broken gravestones. So far as I can learn, the one lasting work of Ottoman rule—I am speaking of works of stone and mortar—is the gigantic pile of Roumeli Hissar, the castle which Mahomet II. built to threaten Constantinople: and even this is half in

ruins, and serves only as a sort of artificial portal to the entrance of the Bay of Beykos.

For it so happens, by the conformation of these winding straits, that as you traverse them you seem to pass from one land-locked lake into another. The channel so twists, and turns, and winds, that, as you enter each of its many reaches, you can hardly guess at what point of those low hills which loom in the distance you will pass on towards the sea. And yet, with all this, the waters are so broad and deep, the grand current rolls so mightily along, the fresh sea-air blows so merrily, that you have nothing of the tameness and sameness of river scenery. In your winding course you shift to and fro between the banks of Asia and Europe, and ever as you approach the one, the buildings which line the other tower grandly across the water. It is only when you come close to them, on either coast, that you are struck with the tumble-down look I have attempted to describe. But, if you are of my mind, and think that what I may call vignette views of water and shipping are more beautiful than anything to be seen on dry earth, you will find it hard to pay much heed to the land panorama constantly unfolding before you. Out in the Pool, between Stamboul and Galata, the great steamships, most of which carry the Union Jack, lie at

anchor; higher up are the Turkish men-of-war, all English built, English rigged, and English armed, and you might easily mistake them for English vessels of the day when our coasts were defended by wooden walls, were it not for the slouching, slatternly figure of the sentry stationed above the companion ladder, the counterpart of whom could never, by any chance, have belonged to a British regiment, even of Marines. All the way up the Bosphorus the waters are full of shipping. The wind blows stiff and strong from the east, and fleets of homeward-bound merchantmen come floating down the current with their full-set white sails sporting in each gleam of sunlight; in every sheltered bay there are moored numbers of brigs and schooners waiting with bare masts for the wind to change, and let them work their way into the open sea above the straits. And besides these "upper ten thousand" of shipping society there is an endless multitude of humble seafaring craft, whose names are not recorded in the books of Lloyd's, nor written in the chronicles of the "Veritas." High sterned, high peaked Turkish caravels, Hellene feluccas, Italian speronari ply to and fro. Caïques, with Turkish women in their sterns, shoot rapidly across the waters; great flat barges are drawn slowly up the stream, the boatmen pulling the rope over their shoulders along

the tow-path, singing slowly as they tramp along, while coming down the current the rowers rise upright from their seats with every stroke they take.

So you wind on, passing backwards and forwards between the shores of two continents, stopping at little waterside villages with quaint names, where crowds of motley personages get in and out, each landing being accompanied with more noise and bustle, hustling and disturbance, than would be required to set a Cunard steamer off on its Transatlantic voyage. And bay succeeds bay, town follows town, each bay and town looking in turn fairer than those which went before, till you pass into the last creek above Bukderè, and catch sight of a narrow opening, beyond which you can perceive no hills—nothing but the broad expanse of the open sea.

PERA.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 9.

"THE suburb of Pera," so my guide-book informs me, "is totally devoid of any Oriental character, and possesses neither beauty nor originality." I venture to take issue with my guide and Mentor on both statements. Pera may not be Oriental, any more than it is English, French, Greek, or Italian; but, whatever else it may lack, it is not wanting in originality. Take a slice from the region included between the squares of Leicester and Soho, transplant the Five Points at New York, throw in a Glasgow wynd, add the little *ruelles* that run up the cliff of Boulogne behind Dimes' English hotel, give a sort of savour of the district in Brussels wherein stands the Prince of Wales Tavern, season the mixture highly with the Ghetto at Rome and the Juden-Gasse at Frankfort, varnish the whole compound over with an Oriental colour, and you will produce a result somewhat like Pera. From photographs, prints, and travellers' books, you get before-

hand a not altogether inaccurate impression of the East; but I know not by what means, other than by personal inspection, you can form any notion of how unlike Pera is to anything you have ever seen before or are likely to see again.

When you land at Galata, you may reach Pera in four different ways. You may go in a coach and pair; but the route is so circuitous, the streets so narrow, and the speed so slow, that very few people, except the beauties of the Harem, who are guarded too rigidly to be exposed to the impertinent stare of the infidel, take the carriage way.—Secondly, you may ride on neat little ponies that stand for hire at the foot of the hill. This is the fashion of locomotion most affected by the Frank merchants; and about five o'clock, when the offices at Galata close for the night, you may meet a large cavalcade of smug elderly gentlemen ambling placidly up the High Street: while Turkish boys, with heavy switches in their hands, run behind, shouting at the horses to "gee" along, and stirring them up with blows when simple remonstrance is found unavailing. If the city brokers and clerks who reside at Blackheath were to finish their journey home by riding on donkey-back from the Greenwich Pier to the Observatory, they would present a spectacle not very dissimilar to

that of the evening's trot home of the Galata traders. But this mode of locomotion, though convenient, is hardly suitable for tourists who want to look about them. The ascent is so steep, and the stones are so slippery, that you have enough to do on horseback in keeping ready for a stumble, without star-gazing at the scene through which you pass.—Thirdly, you may make the ascent in a sedan chair; and, if you are at once a philosopher and wealthy, you get to Pera more comfortably this way than any other. But to ordinary human nature there is something detrimental to one's sense of dignity in being carried in a *chaise à porteur;* and this feeling is increased by the fact that, as sedan chairs are usually reserved for women, you are liable to have passers-by peep in at every step; and, if you belong to the more worthy but less lovely gender, their comments, and still more their looks, as they turn away disappointed, are not gratifying to your personal vanity. Moreover, whatever may be the case, when their burden is fair and fat, the carriers—supposing you not to be a person in Mr. Mill's sense of the word—have a way of rocking the sedan chair to and fro in a manner which reminds you forcibly and unpleasantly of the swings of one's youth.—The last, and not the worst, means of getting up hill is by that conveyance which—why or

wherefore I know not—is called Shanks' mare. And that, supposing the day to be fine, is the mode of reaching Pera I personally recommend.

No doubt the ascent is a very long and a very stiff one. Pera, according to antiquarians, is so called from the Greek word *πέρα*, or "farther on;" because when wayfarers from Istamboul reached Galata, and asked their way, they were always told "Farther on." You may believe the story or not, as you like, but it is certain that, long before you reach the top of Pera hill, you will ask how much farther it is any number of times. Immediately on leaving Galata you enter the "Grand Rue de Pera;" and the name suggests to you a street with sidewalks and pavement of the European sort. Nothing of the kind. The Grand Street of Pera for half its length is neither more nor less than a steep flight of large, low steps, with a herring-bone pavement, all the stones of which are out of joint. As to the shops, which line either side of the street, they are of every class and nation, but all uniformly sordid and shabby. Towards the foot of the hill the Hellene element predominates; and the inscriptions are mostly in Greek. Here bookstalls and photograph-shops abound, and the portrait of George *Βασιλευς των Ελληνων* is to be seen in every

shop-front. Then, a little higher up, British taverns, ship-chandlers' stores, second-hand slop-shops abound, and the Union Jack is painted over doorways on which Turkish characters are also inscribed. The names of the alleys, which run off from the main thoroughfare in every direction and at every angle, are written up in French and Turkish on a broad green pallet of paint dabbed upon the whitewash. Then, somehow, Italian predominates; and the cheap restaurants, the cigar-shops, the flashy printsellers' establishments are served by men of unmistakable Italian gait and look. Farther on is a colony of German tradesfolk, watchmakers, furniture-dealers, sausage vendors, and tailors; and everywhere you see fair-haired, blue-eyed Teutonic faces, fresh as it seems from the Fatherland. Then a Turkish burying-ground, a mosque, and an English newspaper office, and you are landed at last on the uphill portion of Pera.

But divisions of this sort between the different nationalities are, after all, imaginary rather than real. In some parts of the ascent one race predominates, in some other; but that is all that you can say. Greeks, English, French, Germans, Italians, are all mixed up together, and the Turkish element is interwoven between them all. Everywhere there are Turkish shops, where men in turbans and

fezes sit smoking crosslegged, and the street is full of the East mixed up oddly and quaintly with the life of the West. The Turkish porters toil bent-backed up the hill, bearing everything that human backs can carry, from a carpet-bag to a chest of drawers, and an iron bedstead; strings of mules, with tinkling bells, trot along merrily; Turkish women, veiled to the eyes, come down the slopes, showing their bare legs above their down-at-heel stockings; Turkish soldiers, in baggy trousers, lounge about on every side; and, amidst the Babel of tongues, you hear, I should say, more of Turkish than of any other.

The same remark applies, though perhaps in a less degree, to the upper town of Pera, or rather to the half-dozen streets cresting the hill-top, which constitute the fashionable quarter. Here, no doubt, French is more or less in the ascendant. The hotels, restaurants, cafés, and lodging-houses all bear French names; and even Missirie's Hotel, which is a sort of little Britain in Turkey, is known only as the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Here are to be found French chemists, French jewellers, French milliners; but anybody who imagines that the "Grand Rue," even at its best, bears any likeness to a French street, will find himself wofully disappointed. The road being level, the pavement is comparatively good; but, in order to appre-

ciate the value, or want of value, of the word "comparative," you must know what is the positive; and this you can never know in the present instance, unless you have toiled up the ascent to Pera. *Trottoir* there is none; and, the street being extremely narrow, it is by no means an easy task to thread your way through the files of horses, mules, donkeys, sedan chairs, chaises, and porters which are constantly passing up and down it. The houses are not Turkish; and the absence of lattices or screens in front of their windows gives them a relatively cheerful aspect; but then they are assuredly not French, still less Italian. In front of well-nigh every house a balcony juts out into the street, covered in with window frames and glass windows; and, as these balconies almost meet each other across the street, the thoroughfare below is dark and gloomy. There are certain cafés, seated in which you might, if the waiters spoke French, fancy yourself in a third-rate provincial town in France; and at the extreme end of Pera lies a suburb where tourists rarely penetrate, and which is occupied by a distinct French colony. But even in the heart of this French quarter there stands a minaret side by side with the Hospital of the Sisters of Charity; and the priests, with their black shovel-hats, the friars, with their brown rope-corded robes, are elbowed in

the street as they walk on with downcast eyes by green-turbaned dervishes.

This main street, however—this "Grande Rue," with its cafés and restaurants—is the one great triumph of Frank civilization in the East. You have only to turn a few steps out of it to come into a district as shabby, and well-nigh as squalid, as any part of Stamboul. No Western energy can triumph over the dead dull weight of Oriental apathy except by sheer force. It was my fortune to meet here an English officer who had known Pera well in the days of the Crimean war, and had not revisited it till the other day. All his impressions of the place dated from an era when you had only to say "Do this," and it was done; and he obviously found it impossible to realize the fact that the Turkey of 1869 was very different from the Turkey of 1854, which a strong, sharp pressure had galvanized for a time into a spasmodic fit of vital energy. Leave the heights of Pera, and go down the hill-side towards the Bosphorus for five minutes, and you have outstepped the limits of the narrow area of Franco-Italian civilization.

Most Swiss travellers must have, at one time or other, explored the by-paths of one of the Valais villages, where squalid châlets are piled together on the

slope of some steep hill-side. Well, the most miserable of these Valais villages would seem clean and civilized compared with the poor quarter of Pera, lying off the central hill-top streets. You would say beforehand, being a stranger to the place, that the English, French, and Austrian post-offices were likely to lie in decent, easily accessible localities. The former you reach by climbing over heaps of loose stones; the latter you attain to by one of the steepest and dirtiest alleys it has been my ill-fate to traverse in any portion of the globe, not excluding Southern Italy. You go down a flight of steps so steep, so ill-paved, and so slippery that it is difficult to make your way; and then you come to a Slough of Despond, across which you have to wade before you reach the haven where you would be. If ill-advised, you try to find another way to the chief central letter depôt than that which begins with a break-neck staircase and ends in a brickfield—than the way, in fact, which is dignified at its outset with the name of the Rue des Postes, and subsides soon after into Tom-tom Street—this, as Miss Edgeworth used to say in her novels, is a fact—you find yourself lost in a maze of squalid shanties, with narrow winding passages running between mud walls. When you get lost in Pera, your pole-star is a high tower close

to the "Grande Rue," from which fires are signalled, and if you can see that tower you are right; but when you are groping about passages some three feet broad, between hovels whose huge wooden eaves shut out the sky, it is not easy to follow the motto of the House of Savoy, and "reach your star." And what makes your confusion greater is that amidst this Pera rookery you come from time to time across buildings which ought by right to belong, in any other town, to a well-to-do quarter. In the heart of the tumble-down dwellings, looking like châlets that have sunk in the world, and fallen, metaphorically, into the gutter, you stumble on a handsome lodging-house, with "Appartements Meublés" inscribed over its entrance. Amidst lanes where the windows are latticed you meet Turkish women picking their way through the slush; every now and then there crop up German and French shops and eating-houses; and in one of the poorest lanes I was surprised to meet a spruce English nurse-maid attending on a rosy-cheeked child, with whom she was remonstrating for walking in the puddles, in the home-like words, "Miss Jane, if you will dirty your dress, I'll tell your ma."

The truth is, that squalor and luxury are so woven up together in Pera that it is hard to say where one begins

or the other ends, while both are bound together by a common bond of dirt. So also, amidst the shabbiness and discomfort of Pera, there is this peculiar charm, that, whenever you can catch a glimpse of the open, you gaze upon views of surpassing beauty; and, as the town is built upon the slopes of a hog's-back-shaped hill, at every winding corner, and from every upper window, you look out over the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, or the Sea of Marmora, over the deep blue waters, and the high tapering masts, on to the towns across the stream, which, in the distance, look like cities of palaces.

Yet, in spite of its originality and beauty of position, I cannot wonder if the foreign Periotes abuse their residence with a bitterness exceeding the normal contempt with which strangers in a strange land always speak of the place where their lot is thrown. I recollect once, in a little shabby English tavern, in the purlieus of Paris, observing an Englishman come in, order a pot of half-and-half, and call out to himself, "Thank God! in this crib you would never think you were within a hundred miles of this beastly Paris." So, if I wished to hear "my own, my native land" abused savagely, I should go to some one of the haunts round about the Quadrant where foreign

exiles congregate; and therefore, taken by itself, I attach no great weight to the assertion of all my resident acquaintances here that Pera is a wretched hole. Yet observation has led me to think their complaints are better founded than those of most Englishmen abroad. Unless you have a morbid taste for treadmill exercise, there is no spot where you can walk for pleasure in Pera. Locomotion is dear and troublesome; and if it rains—and, to tell the honest truth, it does rain with a vengeance in the "glowing East"—the streets are impassable, from the streams of water which pour down in self-made gullies. If you wish to go out in the evening, and to reach your destination without being splashed all over with mud, you must go in a sedan chair; and in most parts of the town you have to catch your chair before you can think of going out at night; and the chase is by no means an easy one.

Amusements, too, there are very few. By nine o'clock Pera seems to have gone to bed. There was once a Café chantant, but the experiment proved a failure; there is a conjurer who exhibits Professor Pepper's ghosts; and there will be a French theatre whenever the troupe can be collected. Early to bed and early to rise is the

only rule at Pera; but whether, by so doing, you become healthy and wealthy and wise is a question on which the practical experience of the Periotes leads them to differ from the traditional lore of the nursery.

THE BAZAAR OF ISTAMBOUL.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 12.

PIERROT has no season in Paris like that appertaining to the clown at Christmas. It is only at little theatres in the far-away boulevards that Pierrot still wields his *bâton*. These minor temples of the drama are unfrequented by the foreign public, unknown almost to the Parisian one, save when an actor of genius like Debureau resuscitates for a time the glories of the true pantomimic stage, and induces some *littérateur* of note to write up the performance, as Champfleury did in his "Souvenirs des Funambules." So you may know the French stage well, and yet may be unacquainted with the very name of Pierrot. But, if the chances of your fate have taken you much into out-of-the-way parts of the Continent, if your tastes have led you always to frequent fairs and kirmesses, travelling circuses, peep-shows, and wild-beast caravans, whenever the opportunity was open to you—you cannot fail to know Pierrot proper—Pierrot with the long, straight, white dress

descending to his heels; with the chalk-besmeared, pale, mask-like face; with the smooth, shining hair, the great ochre-stained eyes, and the long, supple wand. It is in front of roadside-booths, on the scaffold-platforms through which you enter to the shrines of magic, marvel, and mystery, that Pierrot is most at home; and to the *habitué* of itinerant entertainments, where all the wonders of the world are exhibited, no show seems of much account unless you are invited, prayed, bidden, flattered, compelled to enter it by the gestures of the mute white-clad Pierrot.

You may ask, "What on earth has Pierrot to do with Istamboul?" The question is not unreasonable; and yet neither is my digression unwarranted. I am about to enter—bearing my reader with me—into the Bazaar of Istamboul; that is, into one of the grandest exhibitions of dissolving views, panoramas, dioramas, poses plastiques, fantoccini, marionettes, tableaux vivants, ever presented for the amusement and instruction of an intelligent public; and, lo, at the portal of the peep-show I see Pierrot—in the flesh, mind you, not in any mental vision—beckoning me onward, and bidding me pass on to make room for the crowd behind. I am standing at the foot of the Bridge of the Sultana Valideh—the bridge which leads from Pera to

Istamboul; and on a wooden stand on my left there are three Pierrots, as it seems to me, playing their parts of fuglemen to the show. They are the money-takers of the bridge, and opposite to them is a guard of soldiers, who, to keep up the pantomimic character of the scene, make a charge at any wayfarer who attempts to sneak through without paying toll, and bring him back in triumph to the grave, silent, white figures at the receipt of custom. Five paras—that is, about one farthing—is the price of your ticket of admission; and the nett proceeds are devoted to relief of the poor. Somehow the costs and outgoings of the bridge eat up the balance available for charity; but this also is not out of accordance with what I have heard of benefit performances in other lands. Past the toll-bar, the rough plank roadway mounts steeply up to carry you across an arch, under which the river steamers pass to and fro; and then, when you reach the summit, the curtain rises on the first act of the entertainment. The scenery is finer, surely, than any which Telbin ever painted. A gorgeous sunlight overhead, making the houses white, the waters blue, the shadows black, with a depth and sharpness of colour which would seem unnatural in any hand-drawn picture. On the left, across the Bosphorus, the cypress groves which overhang the graveyards of Scutari; on the

right, the Golden Horn, winding up past the yellow blocks of barrack buildings; in front, the sloping hill-side of Istamboul, covered with a dark mass of roofs and terraces, gardens, and domes, and minarets; above all these the Mosque of St. Sophia towers proudly: on the stream, flowing swiftly beneath our feet, a flotilla of steamers, barques, caïques, clippers, men-of-war, rafts, and barges lying moored mid-stream or plying hither and thither.

But on the beauty of the decorations, or the water effects of the piece, we must look later, for the stage is filled with the actors, and the performance has begun. Two dense streams of human beings keep passing constantly Galata-wards and Istamboul-wards at one and the same time. Rule of the road there is none, so that the throng is mixed up together, each man pushing forwards or sauntering onwards wheresoever he listeth. The business of the day is drawing to an end, and the merchants are coming home from their offices at Galata, while the Turks are pressing out to enjoy the cool air of the evening. Try, when your eyes are no longer dazzled by the mass of shifting colours, to divide the multitude into its component elements, and you will see there Turks with turbans, and modern Turks with no trace of garb to distinguish them from the Giaour save the scarlet fez; Albanians, with their starched white

petticoats, red sashes, and pistol-mounted belts; Jews from the Seludje quarter, with long dark gaberdines and curled ringlets; Frankish merchants, in the chimney-pot hats and top-coats of the West; Maltese, with earrings and chains innumerable; English sailors, and fair-haired German clerks. But, indeed, you have but little time to look about you, as you are hustled backwards and forwards by the surging crowd. For a few steps or so the current flows easily, and then there is a halt, and you hear the shout of "Guarda! guarda!" You look round, and there, staggering through the throng, come a number of Arnaut porters. One carries a bundle of iron rails on his shoulders, the ends dangling up and down as he stalks along; another has an immense barrel of wine as his burden—his back is literally bent parallel to the ground, as he presses on with downcast eyes. You fancy you must see the man fall, or hear his spine crack, at every moment; but he toils on, and is lost in the crowd. Then follow men carrying fowls, or large quarters of beef, or basket-loads of grapes. Stop a moment you must, though a dozen porters may be screaming "Guarda!" at your ears. There, tripping daintily along the side walk, come three Turkish Girls of the Period. Great must be the lamentations of the old women of Istamboul, of either

sex, over the degeneracy of these modern daughters of the Moslem. Their veils are so diaphanous—I think that is the proper word—that you can see beneath them their soft, smooth cheeks, not innocent of powder; their large, henna-stained eyes, their small mouths, and bright red lips. The orthodox leather slippers, and the loose stockings down at heel, have been discarded in favour of dapper kid boots, above which the silk stockings are drawn tight and trim; and under the conventional wrappers there peeps out the fringe of a frilled and furbelowed petticoat. They are followed, too, by no attendant; they have parasols and gloves, and, except for their muslin veils, you might take them for the daughters of an uncircumcised Giaour. If they do these things abroad, I wonder what they must do at home!

But the current of these reflections is suddenly broken by the tramp of a horse close to my back. I jump on one side, and a Pacha, in the glossiest of broadcloth and the shiniest of boots—a very Beau Brummel amidst Beys—comes trotting along on a neat park hack, equipped with a saddle and bridle of unmistakably English make. Behind him there runs a body servant with a whip in his hand, whose duty it is, so far as I can discover, to keep the crowd from pressing too closely on his master's heels, and

to whip the horse up the steep flights of stairs which form the main thoroughfares of the city. And now the crowd parts from side to side, as a brougham and pair—which might be driven without attracting notice in the Ring or the Bois—comes jolting along over the uneven planks. Through the plate-glass windows you can see bright eyes flashing out from amidst a confused heap of silk and muslin; while close after the carriage there rides an unwieldy, beardless, middle-aged man, who brandishes a green silk umbrella, and keeps shouting himself hoarse to warn irreverent bystanders from gazing at the occupants of the brougham. Upon the world on foot the mounted guardian of the Harem looks down with sublime contempt. There is compensation for everything, and if you wish to attain to the society of great ladies you have to pay for it, in one form or another, in the West as well as in the East.

The crowd soon closes in; dogs, and beggars, and bare-legged shoeblacks start up at every moment beneath your feet, and the sun beats down upon a forest of white umbrellas. Pushing their way through the crowd come a company of Turkish women of the poorer sort, with coarse white veils tightly bound over their faces, followed by a negro slave carrying a basket-load of purchases made in

Galata. Then the footpath clears itself at the loud tramp of feet, and a company of Turkish soldiers comes marching by. Surely a raggeder, more forlorn band of footsore rapscallions never marched through Coventry. At their head strides the officer in command, bearing on high the dark red Turkish flag; after him there hobble on a hundred or so of his men in twos and threes. Uniform they wear none. Once upon a time their coloured shirts and scarves were probably of the same shade, but that time must have been long ago. Their clothes are so ragged, have been so rent, and darned, and patched, that I defy you to say what may have been their original hue or texture. Arms, also, for the most part, they have none; a canvas bag is tied under their left arm, out of which hunches of brown coarse bread may be seen peeping; their feet are bare, or bandaged round with sacking; they make no attempt to march in time; they look, in fact, for all the world like the gangs of convicts you meet tramping through the streets of Naples, going from their work back to their prison, only that these men wore no chains, and are even worse dressed. The regiments in the outlying provinces are being brought into Constantinople, to take part in the great military manœuvres to be held in honour of the Empress's visit; by next week they will be

got up for the show: they are more picturesque, though less impressive, in their work-day attire. Then follow more pachas, more broughams, more eunuchs, more porters, more veiled ladies, more dogs, and beggars, and soldiers; and so you slowly move along, gazing on a kaleidoscope, which keeps constantly shifting its colours, till at last you find that you have left the planks, and are treading on the stones of Istamboul. I use the words "treading on the stones" in no metaphorical sense, but as the expression of a plain, literal fact. I have known many bad streets, many ill-paved streets, many streets which were to the feet a very Calvary, but to no street over which I have ever trod can I decently compare the alleys of Constantinople. If they were ever constructed at all by human industry—a point on which I feel doubtful—the process of road-making must have consisted in turning a cartload of large jagged stones upon the earth, and leaving them to be stamped down into the ground by the pressure of human feet. In fact the Turks have made their roads on exactly the same principle as the London vestries make theirs, except that the stones are larger in Turkey than in England, and the agency by which they are pounded into some sort of shape is that of feet—for the most part bare, —not of iron-shod hoofs.

However, the wonders of the Bazaar are worth mounting up even a harder ascent than that which leads from the bridge; and before commencing your task you will do well to wait between the acts of the performance in the quaint, grimy Piazza, which lies at the water's edge. Here the open-air provender-sellers of the East ply their trade merrily. Men with great earthen pitchers on their heads walk about tendering glasses of water. Peripatetic bakers hold out to you long sticks encircled with hoops of bread, any number of which you may pull off, if you think fit. Spanish chestnuts fizz and crackle, as they roast upon the charcoal stoves which stand at every street-corner. Hard by, too, in broad iron saucepans simmering over the fire, are arranged long spits, with little knobs of meat skewered upon them. The spit is proffered to you as you pass, and, with finger and thumb, you pull the pellet of meat off the skewer, and transfer it, hot and savoury, to your mouth. Round about are the money-changers' offices, where great piles of big copper piastres, large as a George III. penny, and engraved with cabalistic Turkish figures, stand piled up in wooden desks, over whose glass lid the dried-up dealers in coin keep their eyes fixed greedily. In the centre of the Piazza are the ponies and sedan chairs by which, if you so will, you may be carried up the narrowest

and steepest of the hill-side streets; and all about the place there hangs a crowd of volunteer ciceroni, who seize upon you the moment you appear in sight, salute you with some garbled *patois*, of which they have learnt one sentence by heart, such as "Comee Bazaar, molto jolis choses, Buonamano, yes, sir;" and, with a monotonous whine, they will follow you for hundreds of yards, stealing stealthily behind you, catching at your sleeve, and repeating the endless "Comee Bazaar," and so on *da capo*.

We pass up a winding street, every shop in which seems filled with the kind of stock-in-trade which might be accumulated if the Margate and Ramsgate bazaars were accustomed at the close of each season to export the fly-blown refuse of their poorer wares to Constantinople. It is not that the articles exposed in these Eastern stores, whether in Pera or Istamboul, are cheap. Their price is creditably high; it is their gimcrack character which most strikes the foreign lounger. Imitation jewellery, twopenny-halfpenny prints, brass-gilt candlesticks, shoddy cutlery, pinchbeck watches, gaudy colours warranted not to wash, make up the "notions," to use a Yankee word, in which the storekeepers most delight. Trumpery is the epithet you apply mentally, as you first peer into the narrow glass panes; and as you turn away disappointed, the unknown

babble you hear around you forces itself unconsciously into the phrase, "Trash! In the name of the Prophet, trash!" Somehow, shops after the European fashion are an innovation to which the Oriental mind has taken but unkindly; and you had better hasten onwards to the old Bazaar of the Yeni-Khan. But you must step gingerly over the stones, keeping one eye on the scene around, and one on the ground below, or else you run no small risk of stumbling over the dogs that lie in every hollow, where the stones have so fallen as to make something of a niche apart. Whether those wretched curs belong to any distinct canine genus, I cannot say. I fancy they could trace a sort of "poor-relation" connexion with the Lake Country colleys. But all distinctive marks of race are obliterated by their common manginess. If any benevolent lover of dogs should desire to give a banquet, after the fashion of the feast in the parable, to which none but halt, maim, and blind curs should be admitted, he might fill up his guest list in any quarter of Constantinople. There are dogs with broken legs, dogs with eyes battered out, dogs with sore backs, dogs with mangy tails, dogs with every infirmity to which canine flesh is heir. Nobody owns them; nobody feeds them; everybody kicks them. They have learnt too much of life to follow the passers-

by; they have no home to go to; they prowl about, snatching such odds and ends of offal as can be found in the undrained, unswept thoroughfares; and wherever they can find a quiet spot, they lie down and doze till some brute disturbs their slumbers. Simple kicks or blows they are used to, and bear in silence, trotting off sulkily; but if, as is more often the case, they are cut at smartly with a heavy lash, they howl plaintively, put their tails between their legs, and sneak away snarling. If the author of the "Sentimental Journey" had ever come to the East, he would have had a word of pity for the Turkish street-dog. But Sterne has left no inheritor of his strange art of pathos; and all we can do is to give these two forlorn curs a wide berth, and let them sleep on in peace, side by side, while we step into the open space that lies before Mohammediah, the Mosque of Mahomet the Conqueror. Within the mosque we have not time to enter. For the paltry sum of five paras you cannot expect to see everything, even in the Exhibition of the Seven Wonders of the World; and so you must be content with the scene outside. Round the walls of the court-yard are ranged the desks of the public scriveners. Upon low wooden benches, placed on the shady side, out of the glaring sun, the scribes sit, squatting cross-

legged. They are all old, grey-haired, and wrinkled, and all seem overburdened with the extent of their knowledge. Strung round their necks and dangling by their elbows are little inkhorns; on their knees are small chess-board-shaped squares of wood, on which the paper is placed; and the pen, when not in use, is stuck behind their ear—not jauntily like that of a City clerk, but gravely and soberly, as if it belonged there of right.

The scribes are too dignified to tout for custom, or even to make overtures to stray passers-by looking about for a notary. They are grave men, learned men, who, when not engaged in their avocation, employ themselves in looking wise, and meditating over the follies of poor human nature. Surely they must have odd revelations made to them, these transcribers of other men's thoughts, and desires, and wishes! There, at the feet of one wizened old scribe, sits a young Turkish woman. Her feet are hidden beneath her yellow wrapper; her shape can scarcely be seen amidst the folds and shawls with which she is girt about; her veil is bound close and thick round her face, as if she were really anxious that her features should not be known; and her bright, flashing eyes, raised up to the old man's face, and her red, pouting lips, tell at once that she is young. You need

not have the power of Asmodeus to know that it is the "old, old story." She is writing to her lover, and the words bubble up so quickly from the small round mouth that the recorder has to lay down his pen in despair from time to time, and tell her to repeat them again before he writes them down in those strange, crooked characters, running zigzag from right to left. Hard by a bronzed, bearded man — a mountaineer, I should guess, from the silver-hilted pistols stuck in his red sash—sits smoking, while the scribe reads out to him a letter which he has received. The news, I fancy, cannot be pleasant; for the customer frowns, and twitches his beard angrily, and stops the scrivener, as if he wished to hear the words read once again. I wonder whether the scribes have discovered that the amount of their remuneration depends upon the pleasantness of the tidings they communicate, and colour their versions of the correspondence according to what they imagine their listener would like to hear! Further on a young Turkish gentleman, "all of the modern time," with varnished boots, black trousers, and a ribbon in his button-hole, is dictating a letter to a scribe. Can it be that on the Golden Horn as on the Thames, there are letters written which the writers would prefer should not be in their own hand-

writing? or am I wronging the young man's heart for the benefit of his head, and is the explanation of the mystery to be found in the simple fact that he cannot write? Allah knows; and it is no concern of yours or mine.

On through the courtyard, leaving behind you a murmur of whispers and scribbling pens, and you pass into the Khan of the leather-sellers. A khan in the country is a sort of night refuge, built in bygone days by some Osmanli philanthropists for the benefit of houseless travellers. Here you may rest all night, and sleep beneath the colonnade which runs round the square courtyard, and quench your thirst at the fountain in the centre. And, to provide for the other wants of the wayfarer, street merchants set up their stalls under the arches of the khan. But in the cities, nowadays, the stall-keepers have mostly ousted the travellers; and certain trades have made each khan their especial habitat. In this khan the curriers have taken up their abode, and the long colonnades, both upstairs and downstairs, are filled with hides, skins, and fleeces hanging on ropes stretched from wall to wall. Untanned cuticle is not a savoury object, and the smell is sickening, even in this land of evil odours.

Still uphill along the streets of low one-storey houses, on the roofs of which there are for the most part wooden

summer-house-looking structures, with many windows. All these windows have their blinds drawn close down, and you think at first the object is to shut out the sun. But you soon see the blinds are drawn on the shady as well as the sunny side of the street, and then the fact dawns upon your mind that these are the harems of the shopkeepers. There the women dwell; and every now and then you may hear a shrill voice from behind the closed shutters, or the sound of a lute. Judging from the crowds of veiled women in the streets, the occupants of these humble harems must go out freely enough; but in the shops, crowded as they are with men, no women are to be seen serving. Out of the street, out of the glare and glitter, you step aside into cool shade and gloom. You have entered the Bazaar; and the change from light to shadow is so sudden that it is some time before your eyes can take in the scene on which they gaze. Then, too, your dazed feeling is increased by the heavy, sweet, fragrant scent with which the air is laden. The savour of incense must be familiar to most travellers; and stay-at-home people who wish to experience it have only to go to St. Alban's, Holborn, where it is laid on with a lavishness, regardless of expense, which I have never seen equalled in any Catholic shrine. But this odour

of the Bazaar is lighter and more fragrant than that of incense, and bears, to my olfactory apprehension, a resemblance to that of burnt cedar-wood. You might get tired of it, doubtless; but in Istamboul it is a luxury to smell any smell which is not of the sewers, sewery.

By the time you have recovered your faculties of observation, you have got far enough into the labyrinth of the Bazaar to have lost your way. No doubt you may obviate this danger by taking a *valet de place*, who will show you each street of mercers in its proper order, and will supply you with a broker's catalogue of all the articles contained therein, as lengthy as that of M. Théophile Gautier, in his "Eastern Sketches." But, according to my view, the presence of a guide and the perusal of an invoice are about equally fatal to any vivid impression of the scene; and *flâneur*-fashion, I prefer to wander at will, following my own fancy, amid that maze of arcades, and galleries, and passages wherein the dealers of Istamboul ply their trade. You may go wrong; you may come upon the Grocers' Company when you are casting about for the Clothworkers' Mystery; but wherever you go you will find yourself somewhere where you would wish to be. We have got somehow—how, I know not—into the Jewellers' Alley. It is a long, dark, narrow passage,

whose painted roof is supported on Byzantine arches, flying across from one slender stone pillar to another. Each shop has a little wooden case in front, filled with trinkets and baubles of no great value. In the dark closets under the arches you can see stones and jewels glittering brightly; and if you want to inspect the gems and diamonds, you must enter in and have the drawers unlocked in which the treasures of the store are stowed away.

Inside the shops the owners sit smoking solemnly, and show none of that eagerness to attract customers that you find in the Bazaars of Russia. You follow the rippling sound of falling water, and, passing by a stone fountain with form well-nigh worn away by the constant trickling of little rills, you get into the broad-roofed street wherein the hosiers and outfitters ply their callings. There you see hanging up on pegs, folded upon slabs, piled in bundles, coats and apparel of every outlandish hue and fashion. You might deck out thousands and thousands of masqueraders from one stall alone. Embroidered garments, shawls with gold thread worked into them in every form of arabesque pattern; tartans, rich in many colours, head-dresses, patchwork quilts, on which the beauties of the harem repose their limbs,

Albanian scarves, sheepskin overcoats, mingle together in strange confusion with rolls of plain English cloth, waterproof coats, and canvas leggings. Here, and here only, does the spirit of commercial enterprise seem to triumph over the stolid apathy of the Oriental trader. The clothes-merchants, indeed, neither call nor beckon to you as you saunter along. But quick-eyed Greeks and Jews mingle amidst the crowd, seize the stranger by the coat-lappet, and pester him, in broken scraps of foreign tongues, to enter some particular store and see the miracles of art which "your excellency" may purchase for next to nothing. Here, in the broad thoroughfare, the width thereof being about that of the Lowther Arcade, all is stir and bustle. Carriages drive through the alley at full trot; though what would happen if two chanced to meet coming opposite ways I cannot guess. Turks on horseback, followed by their footmen, pass along it in numbers; donkeys, with long planks hung over their saddles, and swinging before and behind them, are driven through it in teams; and on the steps of the stores there squat street-mongers, with baskets of cheap goods placed before them, nobody bidding them "move on," and no policeman taking them in charge for obstructing the thoroughfare; and overhead, amidst the timbers of the roof, great flocks of

pigeons are perched, the flutter of whose wings, as they fly to and fro, is heard above the hum of many voices. Turn aside for quiet into that lane which looks comparatively empty, and you are in the midst of the shoemakers' quarter. Sewing-machines are unknown; and the Turkish disciples of St. Crispin sit crosslegged on the floor, stitching away merrily on the soft kid-skins out of which those dapper boots are made. You would hardly think the world contained so many slippers as you see displayed here. Pointed toes and high-peaked heels, trodden down when worn under the sole, are the foot-gear affected by the orthodox. But for the Giaour there are shoes and boots of European make, adorned, if you so fancy, with gilt thread and embroidery; and in the article shoe you can find nothing prettier than the wee, tiny, baby bootlets on which the gold pattern is traced so daintily.

Then, in your wanderings, you find yourself out again in the open air, treading narrow, unroofed alleys, which are of the Bazaar, and yet not in the Bazaar, where trades which have failed to get a footing in the old precincts have established their abode. You think you have quitted the Bazaar, and suddenly, without rhyme or reason, you are back again in the half-lit vaulted passages. After a

time, you will get confused in your reckoning, and all the trades, crafts, callings will grow mixed up in your memory, as if you had been learning by heart the names of the Citizen steamers and had lost your place, or as if you had been repeating backwards that childish alphabetic ditty about the shops, of which, if I remember rightly, the first couplet runs—

> A was an armourer, able and old;
> B was a butcher, bloody and bold.

Was it at the spice-vendor's or the feather-dealer's mart where the sunbeams, glancing in through a slit in the roof, made so quaint a picture of the Turkish girl's head as she stooped over the wares laid out before her? Was it at the pipe-manufacturer's or harness-dealer's that that ancient Armenian sat puffing such silvery clouds of smoke from his chibouk? You have Bazaar upon the brain, and cannot exactly tell. You have a general impression of endless galleries, of countless articles of merchandise, of a Vanity Fair like that through which Christian strayed in his progress towards Jordan; and you feel that every show must end, and that you have seen enough.

But to quit the Bazaar is not so easy to enter it. Dædalus himself would have lost his way had he been

placed in the midst of the Bazaar of Istamboul. There is but one clue to your way; and that is to go down hill, and sooner or later you must come to the water's side. Following this maxim, you stumble on, making many false starts and turnings without end. For the alley which started to the right bends sharply to the left, while the steps which run down hill so steeply at the outset suddenly turn into an ascent, which tires the few muscles the jolting downwards has left unstrained. However, by keeping rigidly to the rule of going down, down, down, you emerge at last into a mass of tottering river-side wharves and warehouses, and then a caïque will carry you over the Golden Horn, and land you at the foot of the bridge of Pera. You look round, and the three ghostly Pierrots are still standing on the *estrade*—still beckoning with mute gestures to the public to enter in and see the world-renowned and unparalleled spectacle of the Bazaar of Istamboul—price of admission only five paras!

THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 13.

ARE they clouds, those dull patches on the faint blue of the far-away horizon, or are they distant islands, or smoke, or mere motes in the eye? This was the issue on which we speculated languidly for hours this morning as our steamer lay drifting slowly with the current in the Sea of Marmora, waiting for the arrival of the Empress of the French. Our interest, however, in the discussion was not very vivid, as the two main points which had formed for days past the subject of active controversy were already decided. In the first place it was certain that the Empress would come, the arrival and departure of the Imperial yacht having been already telegraphed from the Dardanelles to Constantinople. Up to the last there were unbelieving sceptics, who declared the visit would never take place at all; and the English portion of the Pera community, knowing that the non-arrival of her Majesty

would be a disappointment to their French neighbours, had naturally supported the theory that the Empress's journey was to be indefinitely postponed. In the second place—and this was a matter on which scepticism was far more reasonable—persons "who knew the country" were confident the weather would be bad. There had been an unusual spell of hot dry sunshine, and water was selling for fancy prices, when on Wednesday the sky was overcast; and from that day to Sunday evening we had a succession of storms and cold winds, and pelting showers. In fact, to speak the plain unvarnished truth, the end of last week was as cheerless and miserable as you could have had on the worst days of a rainy London autumn. The weather had broken, the winter had set in—so we were assured by the weatherwise; but on Sunday evening the sky cleared, and again we had the deep bright blue, the golden sunshine of the East. To-day was a very prince of days; even the most despondent of mankind could not entertain a doubt that the great gala reception, which Constantinople has been planning so long, would be accompanied with all the glories of Eastern warmth, light, and colour.

We had started early from Galata, our steamer being one of a score or so which had gone forth to meet the *Aigle* out

at sea. One and all, we had the tricolour floating at the fore, and our ropes decked out with every kind of bunting. The flotilla was a gay one enough. The Messageries Impériales had placed one of their steamers at the service of the French residents; and the *Neva* led the way with her flags flaunting merrily. A little British tug-boat, the *Leinster*, was chartered by the English merchants, and soon carried the union jack to the front of many a larger craft. An Italian vessel, the *Ercole*, was filled with the girls of the Catholic schools at Pera; and amongst the yellow straw hats and brown dresses of the children there were dotted here and there the black robes and snow-white caps of the Sisters of Charity. One boat was set apart for Turkish ladies, and the paddle-boxes were covered with veiled figures in mantles of every colour: the remainder of the convoy was made up of steamboats sailing under the flag of the Crescent, either hired by private parties, or patronized, like the one in which our seats were taken, by the general public. The red fezes of the male passengers, and the gay dresses of the Turkish women, gave a brightness even to the dirtiest and dingiest of cargo-boats; and with bands playing, colours flying, and handkerchiefs waving, we set forth on our way rejoicing.

The troops were massed closely on the low beach beneath Seraglio Point as we sailed out to sea; there were crowds gathered in the gardens of the palace, and on the parapets and roofs of the waterside houses. The very porpoises seemed to have come out in force in honour of the day, and tumbled in shoals about our bows with that strange slow circular motion which always reminds me of a rotatory knife-grinder. We sailed on, leaving Istamboul behind us, past the low flat shores of Roumelia—which, to make a candid confession, are as like the coast of Essex, off Southend, as well can be—till we had dropped down below the Greek village of San Stefano, and the Islands of the Princes began to rise clearly in view from out the sea. But still there was no sign of the Imperial yacht, and our little squadron drifted apart far and wide. So we sat and dozed, and gazed through field-glasses, and tried to discover smoke where no smoke was. There were false alarms, ever and anon; but the clouds of smoke in the offing always turned out to belong to some adventurous steamer which had pursued her voyage of discovery further down, and was now pressing back to regain her place. The waiting, however, was pleasant enough. The fleecy clouds over head kept off the full heat of the midday sun; the fresh salt sea-breeze made the act of breathing a luxury;

and the dark blue waters were studded over with merchant vessels, tacking up and down the narrow sea.

At last, about noon, a puff of smoke larger than any we had yet seen was discerned in the far west. Then it faded from view, and reappeared larger and darker, and then with our glasses we could see tall taper masts, unadorned with bunting, peep out from amidst the haze. Every moment the hull grew more distinct; and as the steamers closed in together off San Stefano we could distinguish the outline of the Imperial yacht. Very rapidly she steamed on, and in what seemed to us but a short interval, she was steering alongside our tiny boat, which lurched, not altogether agreeably, as the passengers pressed to the starboard side, cheering lustily—Turks and all. The tricolour waved from the midmast of the *Aigle;* and at her stern there was hung the Imperial standard of France, with the crown in the centre, and the bees of the Buonapartes worked into the ground of the red, white, and blue. None of the Imperial party were visible on deck. On the paddle-boxes was a group of French naval officers; but indeed the *Aigle* is so rapid a steamer that it was not easy to see much of her as she glided by. The Turkish iron-clads had long been distanced; indeed, as it turned out, they had never left Gallipoli; and the only escort of the Empress's vessel was

an Ottoman dispatch boat, the *Piertew*, which followed at a considerable interval. The moment the *Aigle* had shot ahead, we of the amateur convoy fleet set off at full steam in her wake, and at starting our stern chase did not seem a hopeful one. Every minute increased the distance between us and the yacht; and, in spite of the positive assurance which had been given us on starting that we should accompany the *Aigle* to the end of her voyage, it looked as if she would have landed the Empress at Beylerbey before we could round Seraglio Point, which now loomed in the distance so fearfully far off. However, even if we had not been in the land where resignation to the decrees of fate is regarded as the one rule of life, there was nothing to be done except to make the best of a bad business.

The bells of San Stefano pealed cheerily over the water in honour of the illustrious visitor as we watched the Imperial steamer passing slowly out of sight amidst a mass of dense black smoke belched forth by the vessels following in hot pursuit. The little *Leinster* struggled gallantly for a time, but dropped behind at last. Steamer after steamer shot ahead of the slow-going tub in which our fortunes were embarked. Even the *Neva*, which made any amount of wash and very little way, puffed past us, with her decks crowded with boys from the French schools, waving ban-

ners on which were inscribed loyal and patriotic mottoes, of which "*Eugénie, l'Occident te régrette, l'Orient te salue,*" struck me as the most ingenious; the ladies' boat—which was not a fast one—beat us hollow; the Sisters of Charity and the school-children gave us the go-by; and the odds were a piastre to a para that we should be last in a race where the *Aigle* was first and the rest nowhere.

But fortune favoured us. There was a hitch in the arrangements of the reception. The Grand Vizier, who had gone down to the Dardanelles on Monday to meet the Empress, had contrived, by some mischance, to miss the yacht; and his non-arrival, together with that of M. Bourée, the French Minister, and that of Djemil Pacha, had thrown everything out. The scandal-mongers of Pera say it is a lucky thing for Aali Pacha, under the circumstances, that the days are passed when viziers who had incurred the Padishah's displeasure received the present of a bowstring. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and the result of this *contretemps* was that the *Aigle*, when she neared Seraglio Point, suddenly turned out of her course to the right, and halted in the roads of Scutari for some half-hour or more. So we had all time to make up our backway, and we, who had been last, found ourselves first in the line of steamers which had formed in a semi-

circle round the *Aigle*. Certainly the Empress could have had no cause to regret the delay: of the noted views of the world there are few more famous than that on which her Majesty gazed at her leisure from beneath the crimson awnings of the yacht's hurricane-deck. On the right were the high bold mountains of the Asian coast; on the left the slopes of the Seraglio Point, covered with the minarets, and mosques, and tiers of houses which look so stately when seen from a distance: and right before her there stretched the Bosphorus, bearing a very armada of ships and steamers, and above the forest of masts and flags there towered the heights of Pera.

Meanwhile the *Piertew Pialé* had overtaken the *Aigle* at last, and assumed its proper position in front, together with a small steam launch which bore some of the dignitaries of the Court. At two the paddles of the *Aigle* began to turn, and the Imperial progress was continued, the Ottoman war steamer leading the way. Forthwith the batteries above Scutari fired a salute; hardly had they commenced when the challenge was taken up by the guns at the Seraglio; and as the *Aigle* steamed on at half-speed the long lines of troops encamped upon the beach at the Point presented arms, the band struck up, and the cheers from the steamers,

which followed close behind the yacht, were taken up by the troops on shore.

Then, as we turned the spit of land on which the Seraglio Palace runs out into the sea, the Bosphorus lay before us crowded with shipping. From Tophane, to right in front of Beylerbey, the Turkish men-of-war were stationed, sentry-like; and above every yard there was a low, white ridge, which, at a distance, looked as if the sails had been furled the wrong side up, but which, as we drew nearer, was seen to be formed by the Turkish sailors in their white duck trousers and jackets. A hard time, poor fellows, they must have had of it, for they manned the yards as soon as the *Aigle* appeared in sight, and were not piped down till the Empress had landed—a space of time which lasted, in fact, a good deal over two hours, and which to them must have been an eternity. It was a disappointment, doubtless, to the ships in the pool, all of which had run up their flags, and to the crowds collected on the house-roofs in Galata, that the Imperial squadron did not pursue the ordinary route up the Bosphorus and shape its course for the European shore. Instead of bearing off to the larboard, the pioneer steamer led the way close in to the Asian coast, and the immense volumes of smoke which floated over the water as soon as the men-of-

war commenced firing must have obscured the view of the procession from the northern coasts. It would be idle to compare the salute to the last I had seen and heard in the Sultan's presence, when the Queen sailed through the iron-clads at Spithead; but, in matter of noise and smoke, enough is as good as a feast; and, as it was, the boom of the cannon made our little steamer shake and shiver, while the white fleecy clouds rolled thick around us. Happily, even at half-speed, the *Aigle* soon got ahead of the convoy, and the smoke cleared away enough to let us see the bright gay scene which lay so close at hand. Of boats and caïques and sailing smacks there were hardly any upon our course. They had been ordered back to the Tophane waters for fear of accidents; and so our steamboats were able to move onwards with as little obstruction as the press boat encountered on its way from Putney to Mortlake during the Anglo-American race. The precaution was a wise one, for the boats were crammed; and, as all the passengers would press to the starboard side to catch a glimpse of the *Aigle*, we lurched and rolled in a way which would have done no discredit to a Thames steamboat.

As it happened, there was not a solitary accident of any kind; and our gallant captain, who sat on the paddle-box smoking, and who always replied laconically to the re-

monstrances of the passengers who urged him to put on full speed by a Turkish sentence which ended with the familiar words, "Ease her—stop her," proved the truth of the old slow-and-sure adage. Past Eukuz-Liman, and Kouzgoundjouk, and Istavros, and all sorts of queer villages with queerer names, we steamed slowly against the current. It has got somewhat out of fashion to talk of a smiling landscape, and yet that word, or its French equivalent of *riant*, is the only epithet I can apply to the scenes within a stone's-throw of which we sailed. With its dark cypresses and bare hill-sides, and scanty rim of houses, this Asia Minor coast looks, as a rule, somewhat dull and sad compared with the European shores, where every slope on which a house can be placed has its nest of buildings. But to-day brightness was assuredly not the quality lacking to those cypress-covered shores. All along the banks Turkish troops were stationed, and on every little promontory, on every hill-slope, on every vantage-point where a view could be obtained without close contact with the vulgar crowd, there were groups of Turkish women, with their dresses of many colours flashing in the sunlight. Indeed, for this day, and this day only, the customary exclusion of the harem seemed to be relaxed. It is true that, in many of the waterside

palaces, where every window of the lower tier was crowded with Turks smoking and chatting, the latticed windows of the upper tier had their blinds drawn down to the very sill; while next door, in some Frankish dwelling, balconies, windows, portico, and roof were crowded with gaily-attired women, laughing and waving their handkerchiefs, as the boats steamed by. But still, to the credit of the Moslem, I must say there were exceptions to this rule. Many of the harems had their lattices thrown open, and the dull blank of the shutters was relieved by clusters of white veils, from under which you could see any number of bright eyes flashing saucily. On the quay, too, there was a spectacle which bore an odd resemblance to the Epsom Downs upon a Derby day. Behind the files of troops there were drawn long rows of broughams, with their horses out, and on the roofs Turkish women sat cross-legged, eating luncheon in the open air.

So we crept along by endless terraces of wooden houses, bearing a kind of likeness to a timber-built Venice, under the shadow of the hills, dotted over with patches of women, and the smoke clouds grew farther and farther away, and the hoarse cheering of the sailors in the men-of-war became less and less distinct, and Beylerbey hardly

appeared to come any nearer. But again our good fortune helped us. Instead of mooring directly opposite the palace, in accordance with the official programme, the *Aigle* steamed on a quarter of a mile beyond, and cast anchor close to the Kiosk of Murad IV., of blood-stained memory. And so, true to his promise, our skipper brought us up to time, and contrived, somehow or other, to moor us in front of every other vessel, directly opposite the flight of steps which leads from the water to Beylerbey. The palace, which my guide-book, with its usual inaccuracy, describes as one of the most insignificant and barrack-like of the Sultan's residences on the Bosphorus, is, in reality, one of the brightest and handsomest. It is built of white marble, square-shaped, and two-storeyed, like all the Sultan's palaces; and its tall, arched windows, with their plate-glass panes and their rich silk curtains, give it a gay, bright look unknown to the other abodes of the Padishah. The long, straight façade is broken by three immense bay windows, reaching from the granite-paved terrace at the foot to the cornice of the long, flat roof; and beneath this terrace there runs a lower quay, flush with the water's edge.

In front of this quay the Sultan's state barge lay moored as we drew up into our coveted position. Something like

the Bucentaur in shape—only that in lieu of the hutch of the gondola there was a rich crimson awning hung over the stern, supported on four gilt pillars—the barge, glittering with gold in every place where gold could be placed, was manned by two dozen boatmen dressed in red. On the quay were crowds of Turkish officers and dignitaries, in the most gorgeous of uniforms; a military band was playing, and the harsh, vibrating, piercing strains of Turkish music, which jar so upon one's ear when heard in a close room, rang forth, clear and spirit-stirring, across the water. Again there was some hitch about the arrangements; and, though the Royal caïques were sent to row round the *Aigle* as soon as she lay-to, it was half an hour or more before the Sultan got under way in his barge. His Majesty was dressed in full Turkish uniform, with the grand green and gold cordon of the Osmanié across his breast. The barge, heavy as it looked, shot rapidly away beneath the impulse of eight-and-forty oars, and in a few minutes was moored alongside the *Aigle*. The Sultan then mounted on deck, where he was met by the Empress at the head of the companion-ladder, the guns of the yacht firing a salute as he stepped on deck. The Padishah shook hands with the Empress in European fashion, and then led her down the steps to the state

barge, her Majesty having changed her oilskin sailor's hat and short yachting costume for a long yellow silk dress with a bunch of ribbons behind, and a small yellow hat with a white feather. Amidst salutes from the ships and forts, and the cheers of the crowds collected in the multitude of boats and vessels which had clustered round the *Aigle* during her halt, the barge darted off to the shore, and drew up at the steps of Beylerbey; the only occupants of the boat, besides the Royal personages, being a French aide-de-camp, in the uniform of the Guides, and a Turkish official, who acted as interpreter. On landing, the Sultan offered his arm to the Empress, and led her through a double line of dignitaries, in full costume, and handsomely-dressed ladies connected with the Embassy, up the marble flight of stairs which leads from the quay to the palace, the band playing the "Sultan's March."

After a very short pause, during which his Majesty presented the officials in attendance at the palace to the Empress, the Sultan left his guest to rest herself after her journey, and returned to his own residence at Dolma-Batchè, the Turkish flag which floated over the gardens of Beylerbey being lowered as he left, and replaced by the Imperial tricolor. Towards sunset the Empress

crossed to Dolma-Batchè, and paid a state visit to the Sultana Valideh, the mother of the Sultan, and the chief personage of the Ottoman Court. Afterwards there was a dinner in the Sultan's apartments, at which the Ministers of State were introduced to the Empress, and about nine her Majesty recrossed the straits to Beylerbey. The night was calm and still; the moon was so low down in the sky that its rays hardly touched the waters of the Bosphorus, and everything combined to give a fairy-like beauty to the illumination of the men-of-war, which were lit up as the state barge set out on its journey to the Asiatic coast. Looking down upon the scene from the heights of Pera, the great ships, with the rows of countless lamps which threw out their ropes and yards and masts, and portholes in relief against the darkness of the night looked something like the barley-sugar craft which at Christmas-time may be seen in the windows of confectioners' shops lit up from behind by tiny wax candles. Altogether the spectacle was singularly beautiful; and, though it is said the Ottoman Court is furious at the series of *contretemps* which occurred during the voyage from the Dardanelles, the outward aspect of the reception was brilliant enough to satisfy the most exacting of sticklers for etiquette.

By ten the lights had gone out and Pera was asleep; and, for the first time since the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, a Sovereign of Christendom was numbered amidst the dwellers in the city of the Sultan.

THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

October 14.

If I had been born to a throne, and if Providence out of regard to the interests of my subjects had deprived me of my sovereignty, I should have found—so at least I fancy —many reasons for reconciling myself to the change of fortune. I am of opinion that in our day, when deposed Princes have their heads left on their shoulders, and are allowed to retain the enjoyment of their property, they have no great cause to envy the Sovereigns who reign in their stead. This, however, is a speculation which would lead me too far away from Stamboul to be pursued further. Suffice it to say, that amongst the many advantages of dethronement, I should reckon, as by no means the least, that of being relieved from the dreadful necessity of being saluted with cannon on every possible and impossible occasion. Monarchs born to the purple, I suppose, grow used to it just as the ducks in Ireland get used to

being killed. When the Princess Clotilde landed at Marseilles on her wedding journey, the captain of the Imperial squadron expressed a hope that her Highness had not been disturbed by the salvos which welcomed her arrival. "Sir," the Princess replied, "the daughters of the House of Savoy are used to the sound of cannon." But to ordinary humanity nothing can be more dreadful than to have the drum of your ear cracked every time you go forth upon your business or pleasure. All this day and all yesterday the Empress has been saluted; and I imagine the salutes will hardly be intermitted for any length of time till the *Aigle* has left the Bosphorus on her journey southwards.

This morning her Majesty sailed, at a little after one, in the Sultan's steam yacht to visit Stamboul; and the whole way there and the whole way back the men-of-war in the Bosphorus fired salutes which made the houses at Pera and Scutari shake again, and filled the air with dense masses of smoke and a strong smell of gunpowder. The day, however, was so bright that, notwithstanding the mist of white haze with which the yacht was shrouded, her Majesty could not have failed to be impressed with the exceeding beauty of the scene.

In the afternoon she returned to Beylerbey, where she

received the exchange visit of the Sultana Valideh; and in the evening there was a private dinner at the Palace, at which I believe the Grand Vizier, the French Minister, and the Turkish Ambassador at Paris—who had missed the Empress at the Dardanelles—had an opportunity of apologizing for their non-appearance on the previous day. All sorts of stories are afloat about this odd *contretemps;* but the most accredited version is that the *Aigle* passed through the Dardanelles in the dark without being noticed by the Ottoman ironclads, and that when the morning was well on, the three envoys who were waiting for the Empress's vessel to be signalled off Gallipoli got a telegram to say that the *Aigle* was within sight of the Bosphorus. They set off at once, but did not reach here till late last night, long after the state dinner was over. They must have had a lively voyage home. Is it not in Hajji Baba there occurs the story of how the Sultan kicked the Vizier, and the Vizier passed the kick on to the Kislar Aga, and so on, till at last the scullion had his tailor made acquainted with the turnspit's bootmaker, and all because the Sultan had received intelligence of a diplomatic fiasco? I wonder whether the cabin boys in the Turkish squadron had a bad time of it yesterday sailing up the Sea of Marmora.

Anyhow, the Padishah is much more put out about the mishap than his Imperial visitor. In all countries, I take it, the host cares more for such things than the guest. If the fish is stale, the wine flat, and the greengrocer refuses distinctly to assume the slightest resemblance to a family servant, the invited only make an indifferent dinner, and the bitterness of the entertainment is reserved for the master and mistress. And in the present instance, besides the natural desire of a Sovereign to make everything pleasant for an illustrious visitor, the Commander of the Faithful is placed in this awkward dilemma, that he has no precedent whatever to go by—no past experience, public or private, to appeal to. Most men must remember the first time in their lives when, as hobbledehoys, they took a lady down to dinner—the dreadful doubt which arm to offer; the perturbation of mind as to when you should put on or take off your gloves; the appalling feeling that you ought to say something and could think of nothing to say. Well, the Sublime Porte must be a good deal in the same state of mind. A large and varied acquaintance with harems does not necessarily confer much knowledge of ladies' society; and this is the first time that Sultan Abdul Aziz has ever had the duty of entertaining a lady, let alone an Empress, thrown upon his

hands. The grave, stately courtesy of the East covers any multitude of breaches of formal etiquette; but I believe that, if the inner life of the Palace during the Imperial visit could be made public, we should find that everything was by no means so placid and tranquil as you might suppose from the gravity of Oriental demeanour.

The real truth about the interior of Courts is, I take it, seldom known anywhere—least of all about Eastern Courts, where there is no direct communication between the women of the Royal household and the outer world. But Pera gossip has picked up or invented all sorts of stories about the intrigues and imbroglios which have arisen in connexion with the Empress's visit. The knowledge of foreign languages possessed by Turkish ladies, whether Sultanas or slaves, is limited in the extreme, and so one of the many questions which of late have perplexed the Imperial councils has been who should attend upon her Majesty and act as interpreter during her visits to the Harem. Two Levantine ladies of high fortune and station were asked to be present when the Empress visited the Sultana, but declined on account of the treatment sustained by a countrywoman of theirs who had assumed the same office on the occasion of the Princess of Wales's

visit. The one object of the Harem—so the scandal runs —was to annoy and insult the Giaour lady, whose presence within the Palace they regarded as an insult. She was offered no food, was kept standing for hours, was expected to rise up even when an Odalisque passed before her; and on her departure naturally warned her countrywomen against exposing themselves to like indignities. Then an arrangement was made and notified officially that two young Turkish ladies of exalted rank, who had learnt French from foreign governesses, should act as *dames d'honneur* to the Empress whenever their services were required. The ladies were delighted at the honour; every expense was gone to in the way of milliners' bills; their French was polished up to the highest point by constant practice—when suddenly, on the eve of the Empress's arrival, they received a message from the Sultana Valideh, to the effect that their kind assistance would not be necessary. It is said that political intrigues were at the bottom of the cruel disappointment which has befallen these luckless damsels. Their families belonged to the anti-Egyptian party, which is now all-powerful with the Porte; and the Viceroy disliked the idea that her Majesty's ears might be prejudiced against him by the influence of these girls' babble. So Abram Bey, the banker of his

Vice-Majesty, came to Stamboul with 600,000*l.*, contrived to stop here for a few days, and was then ordered to leave the capital within four-and-twenty hours. But in the interval he had managed to invest no small portion of his money; and the Sultana Valideh saw reason to dispense with the services of the young princesses. Whether there is a word of truth in the whole story, beyond the fact of Abram Bey's visit and expulsion, I have no means of learning. I only tell you the scandal as current in Pera society; false or true, the fact of its being circulated throws some light upon Ottoman Court life.

THE GARDENS OF THE DEAD.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 10.

"MAY the grave of your fathers be defiled." This, so far as Oriental studies, which began with the "Arabian Nights" and ended with "Eöthen," have taught me, is the most terrible malediction known to the Turkish tongue. So, too, all authorities on the East will tell you that the feeling of the Moslem about the graves of his kinsfolk is of an intensity which we of the West can scarcely realize. I am not altogether sure that this idea, like a great many popular impressions about the East, is not based upon a delusion. The last of the new palaces which the Sultan is constructing on the shores of the Bosphorus, is built right over a graveyard, and under the foundations there are buried the bodies of thousands of believers. Of all countries I have known, the one in which the feeling about the dead bodies of those who were near and dear to us in life is developed to the strongest, I may almost say to the most morbid degree,

is New England. During the war there was a very lucrative business done in the embalming trade, as the bodies of the Northerners who fell in the South were brought back whenever the family could possibly afford it, no matter how great the distance, to rest amongst their own people in their own State. I recollect that going down to Cairo—the one Martin Chuzzlewit has made famous, not the one I am bound for now—the train was laden with whole piles of lead coffins, on their way to Shiloh Landing, to bring back the embalmed remains of soldiers who had perished at the battle of Manassas. The story, whether true or false, that the Confederates desecrated the graves of the Federal dead seemed to me then to be the one sin for which, in the Northern mind, there could be no forgiveness; and, as a matter of fact, if you wish to see graveyards decked out like gardens, tombs kept and tended carefully, and the honour of outward homage paid reverently to the remains of the departed, you must look for these things in the go-ahead, progressing, dollar-loving West, not to the East of romance and fiction.

Yet there is this to be said for the Eastern fashion—that here, after all, the dead are not buried away altogether out of sight and mind. In Kensal Green, let me say, or High-

gate, you may have an excellent air-tight, water-tight vault, secured in perpetuity, a neat gravelled path leading up to your mausoleum, a spick and span tombstone on which your virtues and achievements are recorded, and you may be sure that the path will be duly weeded, the stones cleared of moss, and the rain kept out of your last domicile; but you may be also equally certain that when you are entombed you will be out of the mind and sight of men. One way or another, it can make no difference; but if you are to indulge in sentimental communings about the ultimate disposal of your corpse, I confess to having somewhat of a liking for these Turkish burying-grounds, which, forlorn, desolate, neglected as they are, still lie amid the busy haunts of men, are trodden daily by human feet, are, as it were, part and parcel of the life around. Everywhere, around the roofs and domes of Stamboul, on the hill-sides of Pera and Scutari, you see patches of dark cypress trees; and wherever you see the cypresses you know that a grave-yard rests underneath their shadow. To a Sultan, if such there ever was, to whom the aspect of a cemetery was so hateful as to Louis XV. of France, Constantinople would be a very purgatory. It is impossible, I should think, to look out from any one of the countless windows

of the capital, no matter in what direction you may turn—east or west, north or south—without seeing the dark cypresses rising before you. And there is something about these trees which, even if you know nothing of their inevitable association with burying-grounds, would yet connect them with the idea of repose and death. Their deep, dusky green never changes in shade or hue; they seem never to grow old; they look as if they had never been young; their tall, spire-like tops point always upwards; and even in the stormiest winds they only bow their heads slightly to the tempest; they may break, but they cannot bend. They have, too, this peculiar property, not common to other trees, that they grow thick and close together without damage to their form or growth. The bushy branches fold round the stem, umbrella-like, so that they can rise hard by each other without mutually interfering in any way; and thus the cypress plantations keep watch, sentry-fashion, over the dead, sheltering them from the sun and rain, and almost from the light of day. Yet, as their boughs do not bud out from the trunk till about a man's height from the ground, you can pass under them among the graves without let or hindrance; while, even in the glaring noontide heat, there is shade and coolness overhead as you wander about these Turkish

God's meadows — as the Germans would say — these gardens of the dead.

They are all alike. The monster burying-grounds lie outside the walls of Istamboul, stretching far away from the massive stone battlements of the Lower Empire over the flat plain of Daoud Pasha. The most sacred and most fashionable of cemeteries covers the hill-side of Scutari; but you can scarcely turn your steps anywhere without coming upon some cypress-grove, underlined with gravestones. There are two which abut the road as you wind up the hill from Galata to Pera. There is one—the fairest in position, perhaps, of all—close by the guard-house at the end of the Grande Rue de Pera; there is another at the foot of the English Embassy's garden walls. There are graveyards everywhere. One and all are so like each other that I would defy you, however well acquainted with the town, to say, if you were brought blindfold to any of them, in which of them you were standing at the moment when the bandage was removed from your eyes. The wilderness of stones below, and the dark shadow overhead, are the same throughout. No care has been taken to wall in the ground; nothing has been done to level the broken surface. Paths there are none, except where the tread of feet has beaten a

track between the trees. The cypress stems mark out roughly the limits of the cemetery, but the gravestones have overflowed into the roads, and round about the outskirts there is a sort of fringe of broken and shattered headstones. Your first thought, as you pass by, is that you have never seen so many stones before. Wherever one can be placed it has been stuck into the ground. Then in a short time it has fallen down and been trampled into the earth, and other stones have been thrust in above it. I suppose that in some way or other care must be taken not to unearth a freshly-dug grave; but to all outward look and semblance each body has been buried, each memorial stone planted, at the first comparatively unencumbered spot which caught the eye of the diggers. If you could fancy that a hailstorm of gravestones had been pelted down from the skies, and that each stone had stuck or lain as it fell, you would get some notion of what a Turkish cemetery is like when seen from the outskirts. Stones upright, stones flat upon the ground, stones slanting at every possible and impossible angle, stones broken, stones turned upside down, stones kept from falling simply by the moss which has gathered round them, stones propped up side by side, stones in piles, stones in rows, stones massed up in heaps—there are stones every-

where, and over all lies a coating of moss and leaves and mildewed fir cones. Where the multitude of dead who lie mouldering underneath can have come from is a thing hard to realize. When a man died, the old Romans used to say that he had gone to join the majority; and even the densely-peopled town which crowds close around the graveyards must surely be desolate and empty compared with the cities of the dead included within its dwellings.

About these gravestones, as you look more closely at them, you find one common form and fashion. They are all kite-shaped, the tail of the kite being stuck loosely into the ground, while the face is adorned with Turkish inscriptions, and over the head there is a fez rudely sculptured, to mark out a man's grave—a sharp peak to indicate that wherein a woman rests. Whether the inscriptions record the age, rank, and name of the deceased, or whether they recite verses from the Koran, I cannot tell. In answer to my questions I received completely contradictory statements from two equally well-informed authorities—a result of inquiries about local matters by no means unusual in Constantinople. The older stones, or, at least, those which look older—for here decay creeps so soon over everything that it is very hard to estimate comparative antiquity—are, if plain, venerable in look.

But about the younger generation of tombs there has crept in a garish and unsightly fashion of adornment. Not only are the memorial plates stained blue, and green, and red, but the stone fezes and turbans are all painted in gaudy hues. There are red caps with yellow tassels, green turbans with white folds, head-gear of stone of all sorts of colours. Happily the colours are so coarsely laid on that they soon get cleared and washed away, and the stone resumes once more its grey dull hue. The tombs are piled together, or rather *were* piled together when first set up, in little groups and patches. Sometimes a bed of earth, loosely thrown up, contains a score of gravestones; a tall, fez-crowned one in the centre being surrounded with half-a-dozen pointed ones, and a number of tiny dwarf stonelets, with pigmy fezes and baby peaks. At the foot of most of the slabs are little holes, meant to hold water; but the water has dried up long ago, and has not been replaced, and the holes are well-nigh choked with dirt and mould. Around the more sumptuous of the sepulchres there are low walls of stone, broken down and tumbling to pieces; and over some few there are wire aviary-looking cages, gaudily painted and trellised with withered flowers; and every now and then you see an anchor or a wreath of leaves rudely traced upon the

gravestone, but otherwise there is neither sign nor emblem.

Indeed, in any attempt to describe the individual features of these cemeteries, you in reality give an impression of greater order and regularity than is to be found amongst them. Even about the graves of which I have spoken, over which there is placed an arbour of wire, everything is in confusion and decay. The slabs lie trodden down round about them; the wilderness of stones has spread itself everywhere; and even on the banks of the high road which skirts the graveyards there are stones enough lying broken and shattered to have paved the highway.

Through the thick, close cypress-groves the wind, slight as it may be, moans fitfully; you look round in vain for the spectacle of either guardians or mourners. On the banks of stone a few Turks sit smoking; through the stems of the trees you can see a veiled woman or two passing slowly; but I cannot discover that they are in search for one tomb rather than another. Indeed, when once you have lost your reckoning, it must be as difficult to trace the whereabouts of any particular grave in these labyrinths of tombstones as it is to find one grain of sand in the desert. And unless you were in the habit of visiting the ground day by day, you would soon find that

your landmarks had been removed, and that new stones had been stuck up above the ones which you had known and marked. I have wandered much about these cypress-groves—indeed, to say this is to say only that I have wandered much about the town, and therefore, perforce, have passed constantly through the graveyards; and I have never yet met with any one, man or woman, keeping vigil by a grave. Each nation has its own customs about its dead; and I have no reason to think that the Turks care less about the remains of those they have loved than do other nations. I note only what I have seen; and, from that evidence, I should say that to visit the tombs of the dead was not amongst the fashions of the Ottoman. So, too, I am told—though in this I speak by hearsay—that the depositing of the dead in their last homes is conducted here with scant ceremony or outward show. When the late Sultan died, they carried his body in a common shell on board a caïque to his tomb in Istamboul; and when, at the death of Fuad Pacha, his diplomatic colleagues desired to surround his funeral with something of European state and escort, they found difficulty in inducing the Turks to depart from their usual practice of burying their dead out of sight as simply and swiftly as possible. Which fashion is the best? Whether hearse

and feathers, mutes, crape, and black gloves are developments of civilization or relics of barbarism, is a matter on which I express no opinion.

But if the Moslem is buried hastily, if his gravestone is stuck in the ground carelessly, if his resting-place is oft unvisited, if for him there is no "Jour des Morts," he is still, as it were, within the domain of the living. By the side of his burial-ground there are open-air restaurants, where the Turks come and sit, and puff clouds of smoke from narghilès, meditating the while, it may be, on the friend who lies hard by underneath the shadow of the trees. Over his grave the feet of women trip, as they tread lightly over the short cuts which lead right through the tombstones. The long strings of mules jingle their bells along the roads by which the graveyards are traversed; the dogs prowl about, and doze undisturbed upon the stones; and even beneath the dark cypress shadows the air is full of all that hum and buzz of insect life with which these Eastern climes are rife.

So I take it, that, putting one thing with another, the inmates of these Turkish Gardens of the Dead have not much to complain of, so far as there is any cause of complaint at all concerning one's ultimate domicile and destination. In Istamboul there are any number of state

mausoleums—"turbés" they are called—where the great dignitaries of the realm—sultans and sultanas, pachas and beys—lie entombed. These turbés are round, watch-house-looking buildings, with iron gratings in their walls, through which you can see the massive coffins standing on the marble pavements, surrounded by huge unlit wax candles and silver lamps, and inscribed with cabalistic figures. The late Duke of Cambridge was fond of saying to any one who would listen to him, that his old bones were not to be rattled down to the cold family vault at Windsor, but were to be buried in a snug, dry little box at Kew; and if, among the Pachas of Many Tails of the Ottoman State, there should be any of the same type as the kindly, cheery, garrulous old Duke, he, I fancy, must wish also that his bones should not be laid in the dark, dreary turbés, but be placed, lightly covered by a thin layer of earth, to moulder under the cypress-trees, where men come and go, and the life of the city throbs and beats, amidst the Gardens of the Dead.

THE MOSQUE OF ST. SOPHIA.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 19.

To visit the chief mosques of Constantinople a firman is required, which may be obtained through your dragoman for the price of about four Turkish pounds, or three pounds twelve shillings English. This valuable piece of information is contained in every guide to Constantinople that I have seen, and is naturally confirmed by the dragomans and *valets de place* of your hotel. In order to diminish the expense, you are further advised to make up a party—as one firman, like a blank cheque, may be filled up for any number of figures. I can, however, suggest, from my own experience, a far better mode of reducing the expense; and that is, not to take a firman at all. Pick up any one of the countless touts who hang about the Bridge of Pera, and pester you with offers of their services, and you may see every mosque you fancy, without trouble or bother, at the cost of a very few shillings. At the same time, in order to visit the mosques pleasantly, you must take care

that your guide is not over-careful of your interests—not over-anxious to secure you against being overcharged. This proviso may appear to the intelligent reader as if it were meant ironically, but it is written in sober earnest. All sorts of odd things occur in the East. The other day I had half my passage fare returned to me on leaving the quay of a river steamboat, because I had got out at a station short of that for which I had taken my ticket; and so to-day, in my visit to the mosques, it chanced that I fell upon a cicerone who erred by excess of honesty. It was not the fault of my selection. A more ill-looking, pock-marked, ragged scoundrel I have seldom seen, even among the loafers round the Bourse of Galata. On the faith of his physiognomy, Lavater would have characterised him as a rogue of rogues, but for all that he showed a morbid desire to spare his customer's pockets, which would have disqualified him from a seat on the board of a limited liability company. He spoke a mongrel jargon of English, French, and Italian, by means of which I could communicate with him easily; and, though he entertained and expressed a deliberate opinion that there was nothing in the mosques worth seeing, still less worth paying to see, he consented to lead me to St. Sophia.

The exterior of the world-famed basilica has been

described time after time. I am not writing a guide-book, and if I were to give you the height, dimensions, and area of the temple in feet or metres, I don't think that I should give you much impression of what the pile is like. Outside you look upon an irregular mass of buttresses, and flying arches, and walls, and battlements, which seem thrown together without any distinct form or plan, and are surmounted by a low flattened dome, above which there soar half-a-dozen pointed minarets. Beyond a general impression of a great pile of buildings, you get no distinct notion from your first view of St. Sophia. The ground around, like all ground in this part of Istamboul, is broken and covered with ruins, and you have to take a rough climb over half-made roads before you reach the basilica. Under the shadow of its high walls there is a kind of open space, planted here and there with trees; beneath the battlements there are rows of little niches, each provided with a water-pipe, where the faithful perform their ablutions before entering the mosque. You go down a low flight of steps, and enter a cool, dark passage, cut off at the end by a heavy portcullis-like curtain. In the centre of this is a platform of planks, at the edge of which you draw off your boots; and, to the best of my belief, there is nothing whatever to hinder any one who

desires from walking right into the mosque without the payment of a single sixpence. But at the door, on the look-out for plunder, stand sentries thrown out by the host of "baakschesch" hunters who fill the temple. Forthwith a colloquy takes place between the Turkish beadles and the guide, which ends—or ended at least in my case—in a demand for a Medjidjé, or a fee of about four shillings, for the privilege of entering St. Sophia without a firman. The amount did not appear to me exorbitant, and I was ready enough to pay it and pass on in peace; but my cicerone refused positively, and insisted that I should put on my shoes, which I had taken off, and walk away to another door, with the assurance that if I did so the beadle would come running after me with an offer to reduce his terms. I doubted, but followed my Mentor's advice, and was not pursued. The beadles knew enough of human—or at any rate of British—nature to be sure that I should not deny myself a sight of St. Sophia for a shilling more or less, and therefore waited patiently for my return. Finding that a feigned retreat had failed to entrap the enemy, our guide—the party consisted of myself and another Englishman—resolved to assume the offensive, and led us round to another door, where, I fancy, Franks do not commonly enter. There was no beadle there, and

our guide pressed us to peep under the curtain, take a glance at the interior—which would show us all that was worth seeing—and then come away without paying a para to anybody. I am not sure that he was wrong in his theory, that one peep was as good as a hundred, but we felt that we could not decently leave Constantinople without seeing St. Sophia, and so we insisted on seeing it regularly. As a compromise, we at last agreed to take off our boots, leave them with him, and walk in without saying anything to anybody.

We did so, and had the satisfaction of seeing St. Sophia for a time without the intervention of beadle or showman. The beauty of the interior consists in its proportions, thanks to the perfection of which you do not for some time appreciate the immense size of the area covered by the dome. But when you have said this, you have said, to my mind, about all that is to be said for St. Sophia from an architectural point of view. No doubt, in the old days, when the shrine was rich with altars, paintings, drapery, and stained glass, it must have been magnificent; but now, with its bare walls, its statueless niches, its dethroned altars, and plain windows, it looks as dull and cheerless as St. Paul's, while it lacks the grace and lightness which redeem some purely Oriental mosques from a

like reproach. If ever mass is celebrated again in the basilica according to the rites of the orthodox Greek Church, little will require to be done to remove the traces of its use as a Moslem mosque. A few hatchments inscribed with Arabic quotations will have to be taken down; the Misrah—the sacred slab which is let into the wall facing Mecca—will have to be removed; and the shrine will be ready once more for the worship of the Cross. But I question whether, even if St. Sophia could be restored to the condition in which it was left by the Emperor Justinian, it could ever emulate, for gorgeousness of adornment, either St. Mark's at Venice or the Kazan Church at Moscow. "Grand," and "spacious," are the epithets you apply to it on your first entrance; and, after you become more familiar with it, you see no reason to alter your choice of adjectives: but if your acquaintance with the East is limited, there is subject for wonder in the persons of the worshippers collected within the shrine, which amply atones for any disappointment as to the internal grandeur of the edifice.

On a low stone pulpit of platform shape, an aged Mollah with green turban was preaching when I entered. So far as I could learn from one of the beadles who soon gathered about us, he was expounding verses of the Koran by a

running commentary. For the first time, I think, in my life, I saw a religious service at which the number of men present exceeded that of women. About forty Turks of all ages squatted round the pulpit on the right, and on the left there were about half as many women, all closely veiled. The preacher spoke simply, and in a natural voice, without the sing-song nasal drawl so common in all Oriental worship, and the congregation listened, to all seeming, patiently and respectfully; meanwhile, in all portions of the mosque there were people praying on their own account. Some lay prostrate on the matting, others kept dropping their heads upon the pavement with the regularity of clockwork; others, again, were reciting long strings of prayer, with a rapidity of utterance which scarcely sounded human. All about the floor were dotted little groups of two or three chatting together quietly, and paying no heed to either sermon or prayer. Except amongst the poor, bare feet were not common. All the better-dressed portion of the congregation had kid slippers or half boots, which, but for the absence of dust, you might have taken for their customary foot-gear.

We had not been long in the mosque before the tribe of beadles spied us out: forthwith we were surrounded by a crowd of Turks, gesticulating so vehemently and fiercely,

that we might have thought they were indignant at our intrusion into the holy temple, if our apprehensions had not been removed by the perpetual recurrence of the word "baakschesch." Of all the shameless higglers in the world, the custodians of places of public worship are by far the worst, but these Oriental beadles surpassed all their tribe whom I have known in utter disregard for the sacredness of the shrine, or the duty of not disturbing the service. They underbid each other; they expostulated, whined, and bullied by turns; till, not wishing to incur whatever penalties may attach in Turkish ecclesiastical law to unseemly brawling in church, we bought off the noisiest of our persecutors for half a dollar each, and left the gang to quarrel among themselves over the division of the spoil. As it was, we saw St. Sophia for two shillings a head, and if it had not been for the misplaced parsimony of our guide, we should have seen it with perfect ease and comfort for twice that amount. When we came out, I half expected to find that our model dragoman had run off with our boots. I had wronged him in my thoughts, for he turned out as honest as he looked dishonest—which is saying a good deal.

THE VALLEY OF THE SWEET WATERS.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 15.

ON Friday, the holy day of the Moslem week, the Sultan goes in state to say his prayers; and to-day the ceremonial, on which for centuries the world of Constantinople has never yet grown tired of gazing, was to have for its spectator the Empress of the French. For days past the households alike of Pera and Stamboul, of Galata and Scutari, have been making their arrangements to witness the procession; and yet, oddly enough, up to a late hour this morning, nobody knew at what time, and at what mosque, the Commander of the Faithful was about to perform his orisons. To all questions about time and place, the very dragomans themselves could only answer, with a shrug of their shoulders, that Allah knew; and as popular expectation had fixed upon the Mosque of the Sultan Achmed, by reason of its grandeur and sanctity, or upon that of Dolma-Bakché, on account of its proximity to the Palace, as the probable destination of the

Imperial progress, the report that the Caliph was going to the obscure shrine of Beshik-tasch was at first discredited. Yet, notwithstanding the uncertainty as to the route, the road which leads from the Palace to the Mosque in question—a distance of about a mile—was crowded long before the time of the procession with a multitude so dense that the Frank community, though they had gathered in full force, were swallowed up and lost in the throng of the Turks.

Except to a new comer, to whom everything is strange and wonderful, there was not much in the sight to repay the heat and dust of the noonday drive by which the procession was to be reached. A long, dusty boulevard stretches behind the dead blank walls of the endless pile of building which constitutes the Palace of Dolma-Bakché. Along one side was stationed a double line of infantry; and the roadway was well-nigh blocked up by rows upon rows of carriages. At every window, on the low flat roofs, on the parapets of the walls, on the road side banks, were groups of Turkish women, in all the glory of coloured robes; and, as you looked up the boulevard, there seemed to be on either side a rich fringe of silk of many hues, which fringe, as you drew closer, turned out to consist of masses of coloured *ferighees*. And of

the broughams which stood thick and close as the carriages upon the hill-side at Epsom, full three-fourths were filled with white-veiled women. The Empress had taken up her station in a kiosk overlooking the road along which the procession was to pass; and at noon, when the muezzin's voice could be heard from the minarets of the Palace calling the faithful to kneel and pray—an injunction which in Constantinople is invariably disregarded—the Sultan set forth on his journey. A squadron of cavalry, mounted on grey, sorry-looking horses, led the way. Then followed a group of thirty Pachas, all decorated with any amount of gold lace and any number of medals, and all splendidly mounted on Arab barbs; and behind them the Sultan rode alone, followed by his bodyguard, who are selected from all the races in the empire, and who wore, each of them, the garb of their respective nationalities. The Padishah was in full Turkish uniform, and rode a white charger, richly caparisoned. The last few years have told upon Abdul Aziz; and it seemed incredible, as you looked upon that grave, furrowed, wrinkled face, that grey hair, that unwieldy form, and those sad worn eyes, that they could belong to a man who has not yet seen his fortieth year. The soldiers presented arms as his Majesty rode along, and the officials bowed to

the ground after the Turkish fashion; but amongst the crowd there was no demonstration of any kind, and indeed the exceeding quiet and order of the multitude was one of the things which most struck a foreign observer.

When the Sultan had passed, the crowd waited patiently for his return. No attempt, or scarcely any, was made to keep the road clear, or to hinder anybody from going anywhere; yet with all this there was neither turmoil nor confusion. The water-sellers, fruit-vendors, and chestnut-mongers plied their trade briskly in the very midst of the road; beggars and cripples showed their rags and sores in front of the carriages; and the out-door life of the East went on exactly as usual—there was only a crowd the more. When everything is strange, it is not easy to pick out one object of wonder from another; but there were some few of the multitude of figures I looked upon, the memory of which abides with me. There were three women dressed after the ancient Egyptian fashion. Their *ferighees* were hung so evenly, and were so thick in texture, that you could tell nothing of their shape or form: and over their faces were wrapped dark-coloured cotton veils with slits for the eyes. A mask and domino would be but a poor disguise compared with these

garbs; and, as to the attire of the ordinary Turkish women, it bears about the same resemblance to these Egyptian costumes as a modern bonnet does to the coal-scuttle head-gear of our grandmothers. My attention was then directed to a negro of immense size, about seven feet in height, and of more than corresponding girth and bulk. He wore a long grey cloak, with a richly quilted yellow waistcoat beneath. With his sword at his side, three deep scars upon his cheeks, and a sort of martial swagger, he looked like what Othello might have come to if he had lived to a mature age and had run to flesh. There was no trace of hair upon his smooth, puffy cheeks, and when he spoke his voice had a kind of penny-trumpet squeak. He was the chief of the late Sultan Abdul Medjid's eunuchs, had been the Kislar Aga of the palace, and, as such, had held the rank of field-marshal. His day is past, and other Agas rule over the Harem of the Padishah; but he still stalked along, grinning with his white teeth, and looking down upon his pigmy fellow-men with an air of dignity. Then, too, there was a stir in the crowd, and a man with bare head, and stark naked with the exception of a tattered rag fastened round his loins, pushed through the crowd, jabbering as he shoved and squeezed. Everybody made way for him, and treated him

with respect, for, as a madman, he was under the especial protection of Allah and His prophet.

With very little difficulty, and with little aid from the Khavass whose services had been secured to me, I made my way right up to the front of the mosque wherein the Sultan was worshipping. To enter in while the Padishah is at his prayers is an honour never yet conceded to the highest of Giaour dignitaries; and even for the Empress herself, there was no admission within the sacred precincts. Outside, the Mosque of Beschik-tasch is a plain, barn-like building, plastered with whitewash, and with a wooden staircase leading from the street to the inner balcony, in which the Caliph prays with his face turned Mecca-wards. Little wooden huckster stalls lay round about the entrance in the narrow ill-paved street. It was in a small tallow-chandler's store, from whose counter you could have almost touched with a stick the doorway through which the Commander of the Faithful was to pass, that I, in company with some score of people, took shelter from the fierce glaring sunlight. Meanwhile, it soon became clear that the order of the return was to be altered. The soldiers who lined the footpath marched off with the band playing airs from "Faust;" the Sultan's charger was led away, and a close landau, drawn by four

coal-black stallions, was driven up to the foot of the mosque's staircase. An hour at least must have been occupied by the Caliph at his devotions; then there was a stir and bustle: the coachman whipped up the horses, the grooms backed and steadied them; the orderlies ran, or rather waddled, to and fro, for running is out of the question when the parting—I know no other word—of your trousers does not begin till just above your ankles; the cavalry drew their swords; a carpet was unrolled down the staircase to the carriage-door; the blinds were raised, the door thrown open, and then, amidst any number of salaams from all the officials within sight, the Sultan, who had changed his uniform for a plain frock coat and grey trousers, came slowly down the steps, got into the carriage, and drove off. A break followed, likewise with four horses; the wheelers, I should add, as in the Sultan's carriage, being driven from the box, while the leaders were ridden by a postilion; and in this break, with due pomp and state, there were deposited the boots which his Majesty had taken off on entering the mosque, and exchanged for slippers. Then there were a couple more carriages, in which the suite and the servants took their seats, and then the cavalry rode away, and the show was over.

From the Djam-Kiosk, whence she had witnessed the *cortége*, the Empress embarked upon the Bosphorus and passed over to Beylerbey, which she quitted later in the afternoon to be present at the promenade of the Turkish ladies in the Valley of the Sweet Waters of Asia. There are two valleys down which there run streams whose waters are thought to possess especial sweetness; and at both of these the *beau monde* of Stamboul assembles every Friday. But though the Valley of the Sweet Waters of Europe which runs up behind the Golden Horn is deemed the more beautiful as a promenade ground, its sister vale of Asia at Kandilly has lately become the more fashionable resort, probably because it is more distant and less accessible, and therefore more select. "La bêtise humaine" is pretty well the same everywhere, and a Turkish student of mankind would not be surprised if he learned that the prettiest drive in London—that along the Serpentine—had suddenly been deserted by all the wealth and rank of the most highly-cultivated of cities in favour of a straight, uninteresting promenade, in which the only objects to be seen are the backs of second-rate lodging-houses and the front of Knightsbridge Barracks. However, the Moslem ladies can make out a better case than their London sisters for the change of their drive. The new

promenade may not be as convenient or as beautiful as the old, but it is beautiful enough to satisfy the most exacting critic. The main objection—perhaps I should say the main recommendation—to the place is the difficulty of getting there. If you do not happen to live on the Asiatic side of the Straits, you can drive down only by sending your carriage and horses across in a ferry-boat—an operation which is at once inconvenient and costly. So the mass of the promenaders drive to Roumeli Hissar, and thence are rowed over in caïques. No doubt you may come by the river steamers; but this mode of locomotion is not favoured by the Upper Ten of Stamboul; and to-day there were practical as well as moral difficulties in the way of using the steam ferries, as almost all the boats had been taken off in order to convey troops to the camp at Beykos for to-morrow's review. So the Bosphorus was covered with hundreds—I should fancy with thousands—of caïques, all darting across the blue waters to the trysting-place of Kandilly, and filled for the most part with bevies of brightly-dressed Turkish ladies. Let me say a word about these caïques. They are built—so an English engineer informs me—upon the best model in the world, and their lines bear a close resemblance to those of the famous Yankee yacht, the *America*, which

beat our English craft at Cowes. It may be so; and I shall be most happy to sail at any time, in a dead calm and with a light cargo, in a caïque-formed ship; but I should most positively decline to set foot on one sailing in rough weather and with a heavy freight. A caïque is a long narrow boat, with its prow and stern bent upwards so as to be clean out of the water, with high thin sides, with a cushion at the bottom, on which you lie with your feet against the stretcher. A caïque is first cousin to the boat in which, according to Raphael's cartoon, the Apostles fished upon the Sea of Galilee; but, unlike the apostolic craft, it has no miraculous powers of defying the laws of gravitation, and two persons, not to mention a dozen, could not stand upright in a caïque without upsetting it. Still, when you have once got in, and before you have to think of getting out, I know of no pleasanter way of crossing the water than in a caïque. It is lighter and swifter than a gondola, and the cushions are more pleasant for lying down. You may have one, two, three, or more rowers, according to the length of your boat, and the state caïque of the Pachas have as many as a dozen boatmen. The handles of the oars are leg-of-mutton shaped, dwindling into a knuckle at the end, by which the rower pulls; and when the oars are out the boat

is balanced, and is as safe as an outrigger, which is not, perhaps, saying much.

I reached Kandilly some two hours before the Empress's arrival, but the promenade was already crowded. At the mouth of one of the numerous gullies which run down from the hills to the Bosphorus, there is a flat meadow, about as large perhaps as the common at Twickenham, forming an irregular triangle, the Straits being the base, and the sides being the sandy bluffs of the hills. On the north side of this meadow there is a marshy osier-bed, through which the stream of the Sweet Waters oozes into the Bosphorus; and only half the plain, small as it is, is available for the promenade. At the foot stands the Sultan's Kiosk, in the centre of a small iron-railed garden, and its white marble walls are broken by large open windows, through which you can catch a glimpse of curtains, tapestries, and chandeliers of surpassing richness. Alongside the quay is a belt of plane-trees, under whose shadow there stands a low pagoda-like dwarf fountain, whose walls are covered with quaint frescoes. My first impression, as I passed from under the plane-trees and caught sight of the scene, was that we had made a mistake, and had been brought to a country fair. At the foot of every tree, grey-bearded, turbaned Turks, every one of whom might have

stood to an artist for the model of a patriarch, sat smoking long chibouks, or puffing lazy clouds of smoke from the mouths of their charcoal-lit narghilés. All about the greensward there were dotted little roadside stalls. Men with leather water-barrels under their arms, and pewter pitchers in their hands, offered you water at every turn. Peripatetic chestnut-vendors, carrying their stores from place to place, supplied you with chestnuts, hot from the frying-pan. There were stalls at which kabobs of meat were grilled and frizzled, and handed to you on iron skewers. There were fruit-sellers with large basket-loads of great green grapes, which they sold by weight in iron scales, slung across their shoulders. There were Armenian pedlars carrying rich quilted carpets in their arms, which you might have bought and had spread on the turf for your Excellency to recline upon; there were hawkers with folds upon folds of muslin, off which they cut pieces to supply the apparently insatiable wants of the Turkish ladies; there were itinerant musicians blowing discordant melodies on cracked instruments; and the beggars, as everywhere, were always with you.

Round the meadow there ran a road, or rather a track trodden down like a fairy ring; and up and down this track a string of carriages promenaded at a snail's pace.

Most of the carriages were built after the fashion of that glass coach in which, according to the pictures in children's books, Cinderella went to the ball at the Prince's palace. Little square boxes, round roofs, and bulging sides; panels adorned with painted flowers; windows, in front and back and at the sides, tricked out with gilt mouldings; the body of the coach hung loosely between high wheels, which seemed to have been made for a far larger vehicle—the whole concern, in fact, was the sort of conveyance you would naturally, had you been a fairy, have developed from a pumpkin. Then there came wooden market-carts, covered in with oilskin awnings; then any number of *fiacres*, which you might have taken bodily from the shabbiest of the Parisian cab-stands; and then a sprinkling of spick and span English broughams. Open carriages there were none; and in front of each of the better sort of vehicles there walked a footman in livery by the horse's head. But to horses, harness, carriages, coachmen, footmen, liveries, "untidy" was the one epithet applicable; the paint was rubbed off, the harness patched, the liveries soiled; and yet, from the richness of colour everywhere, there was no look of poverty—only an air of shiftlessness indescribable.

Of the coaches, carts, broughams, and other vehicles,

fully four-fifths were filled with Turkish ladies; and to the stranger the female element was the one absorbing object of interest. There were women everywhere—women packed close together in the carriages, women seated in long rows and batches on the quay side, by the rails of the Sultan's garden, on the spits of sand running out into the water, on the banks overshadowed by the plane-trees —women walking in batches side by side, women squatted on shawls, and carpets, and cushions, spread out upon the turf—women of all ages, sizes, heights, colour; and all, with the exception of a few Franks and Armenians, wearing the *yasmak*. In the letters from Adrianople of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Mr. Pope's correspondent dilates upon the advantages which the Turkish costume affords the Ottoman ladies for the prosecution of their intrigues, and declares her conviction that no husband could possibly recognise his own wife, no brother his own sister, if he met her abroad in the streets. Fashions must have changed much from those prevalent in Adrianople a century and a half ago; for, as veils are now worn in Turkey, the most short-sighted of mankind can recognise the features of every woman he meets. I am speaking not so much of the common multitude, but of the ladies who ride in coaches and are attended by eunuchs. The

veil in most cases is the merest shadow of a pretence, consisting of one fold of thin muslin bound so loosely over the forehead and chin as scarcely to cast a shadow upon the face. A few years ago it was the fashion in London among the ladies who desired to be conspicuous to bind a white veil tightly from one side of their bonnet—there were bonnets in those days—to the other. Well, the features of these English ladies were far less visible than those of the Moslem dames. I saw many ladies upon the promenade whose veils were so scanty and slight I had to look twice to assure myself of their existence, and I did not see one whose features you could not trace with perfect ease if you chose to use your eyes and to look a little longer than would perhaps be recognised as quite polite in the West. But, though the *yasmak* exposes the face, or at most only softens the sharpness of lines and mellows the tint of the skin, the coloured wrappers, the *ferighees*, which I have mentioned before, and which are invariably worn, do to a great extent conceal the figure. I suppose women will contrive to spend money on milliners in defiance of every difficulty; but, for all purposes of outward adornment, it is hard to see why the most extravagant of Ottoman dames should spend anything on the garments underneath her wrapper. So

far as I could see, the ladies whom I passed wore loose linen jackets under their *ferighees*, fastened round the neck with gold brooches. Beyond that, personal observation could avail nothing; but I was told by an English lady resident in Turkey that all the women I saw about me had shawls bound round their waists, and long muslin pantalets coming down to their ankles. I am inclined, however, to think that many of the more gorgeous dames wore Parisian costumes concealed beneath their cloaks. Under the folds of muslin which covered the backs of their heads you could see chignons and little pork-pie hats, and curls and flowers. So, too, underneath the fringe of their dresses, as they sat crosslegged on the ground, you could see every variety of foot-covering, from the old-fashioned wide yellow slipper to the tiny shoe with the red rosette above the toe; and in more than one instance, unless my eyes deceived me, I saw peeping from under the Turkish wrapper a high-heeled betasselled Parisian boot.

Yet it seemed to me that this sort of outward approximation to European costume made still more manifest the iron barrier which excludes these Turkish women from all social intercourse. If you see a woman veiled and shrouded so that neither face nor form can be recognised, you are

not surprised at her holding no communication with the outer world. But when you see multitudes of young, handsome, richly-dressed ladies surrounded by a crowd of men, there is something unnatural and painful in the fact that they hold no converse except among themselves. You could walk as freely amongst the carriages and in front of the benches whereon the women were seated as if you had been on an English racecourse; and as you passed you could see the women laughing and chattering to each other, using their eyes freely and even boldly; but you never by any chance saw a Turk speaking to any of his womankind. Signals may have passed, glances been exchanged, billets handed, possibly words whispered between the occupants of the Cinderella coaches and the men who stalked past with such seeming unconcern. Of this I know nothing. All I can say is, that there was no outward sign or token of any communication between the men and women in the crowd. The black eunuchs stood close to the carriage windows, and the ladies sat in groups apart, chatting to each other, eating sweetmeats, drinking iced water, making cigarettes, and looking at the wives and daughters of the Giaour who were walking about freely with husbands, brothers, and friends. The small squat Turkish children, dressed in short round dressing-gowns of gorgeous colours,

played about on the ground; little Turkish girls, too young to be obliged to wear the veil, might be seen dressed European fashion, with frocks, round hats, and long plaited curls; and on ponies scarcely higher than dogs there rode about miniature Pachas escorted by negro grooms.

Concerning the reputed beauty of the Turkish women, I confess I could form very little opinion. The authoress from whom I have already quoted informs her readers that if, like her, they had visited the Bagnio, and seen the ladies of the harem in the costume of Eve before the Fall, they would have forgotten all about their faces in the admiration of the other beauties then and there revealed. Without endorsing Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's theory, that the value of a fair face is prized so highly simply and solely because it is the only portion of the female form exposed to view—a statement which is assuredly not true nowadays—I grant freely that, if you see a woman's face only behind the folds of a veil, it is not easy to speak confidently as to her charms. All I could see was that large liquid eyes were very common amongst these Turkish beauties, the skin fair, the complexion exquisite. But I could see also that cosmetics and paint were freely, not to say lavishly, used; and if in London or Paris, with all the facilities of observation and inspection afforded at once by

custom and costume, you cannot tell where nature ends and art begins in the structure of female loveliness, how can you expect to know anything about the matter when the object of your study defies close examination from behind a *yasmak?*

The sun was getting up near the hill-tops of the Bosphorus when, after many false alarms, the Sultan's yacht steamed round the headland of Kandilly. Her Majesty was rowed ashore in one of the Imperial caïques, and, upon entering the Kiosk, came forward at once on the balcony and stood there for some minutes in order that the crowd might have an opportunity of seeing her. Open carriages were brought round to the door; and the Imperial party, instead of joining in the ring, as had been expected, drove some little way up the valley. Forthwith there was a rush homewards, and for hours the Bosphorus was covered with heavily-laden caïques, wending their way to Istamboul.

THE REVIEW AT BEYKOS.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October* 16.

THIRTY-SEVEN years ago, there was a Russian army encamped at Beykos, on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus, exactly opposite to the unsightly palace which has just been erected at Therapia, at the cost of the British taxpayers, as a summer residence for the ambassadors of England. In 1832 Mahmoud II., the destroyer of the Janissaries, called in the aid of Russia to assist him in suppressing the revolt of Mahomet Ali; and the Tsar, nothing loth, sent an army under General Orloff, which advanced as far as Beykos, and, after the submission of the Pacha, was reviewed by the Sultan on the same ground where his son to-day presided over the military display given in honour of the Empress of the French. More recent historic memories attach to the Bay of Beykos. It was here that the allied fleets lay at anchor in 1854, when the news of Sinope caused them to enter the Black Sea and commence in earnest the war that was conducted so

brilliantly and ended so fruitlessly. For weeks past the heights above the little Turkish village have been covered by long lines of white tents, which, seen from a distance in this clear air, look like great flocks of sheep browsing on the bare hill-side. Had the original programme been carried out, the review would have assumed far larger proportions than it actually did; but disease set in among the troops, and from this cause, coupled with the uncertainty that prevailed about the Empress's visit, the camp was broken up—the tents being left standing. Under these circumstances it was determined to substitute a military promenade for the more elaborate manœuvres of a field-day; and though the regiments were recalled hastily from their country quarters, only about 20,000 men could be collected in time for the display.

Behind the town of Beykos there runs back from the Bosphorus a long, narrow, flat, triangular plain, about a mile and a half in depth, and half a mile in width at the broadest part, completely surrounded by hills. A prettier position for a review could scarcely be found. The hills slope steeply up from the foot of the broad grassy plain, through which a tiny stream winds down to the sea; and at almost every point of this natural amphitheatre there are pleasant knolls and clumps of brushwood where you can

sit at your ease and watch the scene below. All Stamboul and Pera and Galata might find sitting room on these slopes; and though the crowd of spectators must have been numbered by tens of thousands, yet, looking down upon the multitude from above, there seemed to be but a few strong patches of bright colour on the brown burnt ground. On the south side of the valley, not very far from its end, a grand stand had been erected for the reception of the Sultan and his visitors. The magnificence of this structure—when you consider that it was intended to be used only for a couple of hours—was characteristic of the lordly extravagance with which the reception of the Empress has been conducted throughout. It is said that the other day her Majesty told the Sultan that she felt ashamed when she remembered the comparative meagreness of the display with which the Padishah had been received at Paris, and could only say he was worthy to inherit the crown of Suleiman the Magnificent. Be the story true, or only well-invented, it expresses what every one must feel who has witnessed these gorgeous hospitalities. Had the stand at Beykos been designed for a permanent resort of Ottoman royalty, it could not have been more lavishly adorned, or more gorgeously decorated. The wooden walls were covered with green tapestry hangings; rich carpets,

every one of which must have cost a small fortune, hung over the balcony; while arm-chairs lined with silk were placed for the Royal visitors. Gilding and arabesque work had been lavished on the façade, and over the painted roof there floated the Imperial standards of Turkey and France.

On the sward the Turkish soldiers sat, with their arms stacked in front of them. All about the valley sentries were posted, with some vague idea of keeping the ground clear for the marching past of the troops. But on this, as on every other gala occasion at which I have been present in Turkey, there was the utmost good-nature or carelessness about allowing the spectators to go where they liked; and the consequence was, that the whole valley in front of the Imperial stand was filled with a motley crowd of carriages and folk on foot—Turks and Giaours—who spread themselves over the line of march, and were forced back only by the repeated entreaties of the officers whose duty it was to clear the ground. There was a double or treble line of carriages such as I witnessed at the Sweet Waters yesterday, drawn up at the foot of the hills fronting the stand; and close behind, running up the hill-side, was a large, compact mass of Turkish ladies. The metaphor about their looking like a bed of tulips is so old and

hackneyed, that I am ashamed to repeat it; yet I know of no other which expresses with the same precision the effect produced at a distance by the sight of those rows upon rows of silken dresses, all varying in colour, but yet alike in the uniformity of their individual hue. It has often struck me, when looking at a bed of flowers, how curious it is that, no matter in what way you arrange their colours, you can never produce anything garish and tawdry. Nature seems somehow to fuse the most discordant floral hues into an harmonious whole. Something of the same effect was visible in those parterres of Turkish women. You would say beforehand that any number of green, red, yellow, blue, brown, and scarlet cloaks thrown down together haphazard would result in a glaring confusion of colours. It is not so in fact. Whether the harmony of hue arises from the purity and simplicity of the component colours, I cannot tell; all I know is, that the harmony exists, whatever may be its cause.

As usual, no time had been fixed, or at any rate announced, for the review. About half-past two the bugles sounded, and the troops suddenly fell into position. With great difficulty—a difficulty arising mainly from the consideration shown towards the crowd—a line was cleared for the approach of the Sultan; and within a few minutes the

Imperial equipages were seen advancing from under the low line of trees that shuts out the mouth of the valley from the sea. Preceded by an escort of Pachas and general officers, the Sultan's carriage drove up to the broad staircase which led to the platform of the stand. The Padishah gave his arm to the Empress, and escorted her to the arm-chair on his right hand, in front of the balcony. The band played "Partant pour la Syrie" as the Empress drove up; but here, as on every other occasion, there was no demonstration of any kind on the part of the Turkish spectators. Djemil Pacha, the Turkish Minister at Paris, stood between the Sultan and the Empress, and acted as interpreter—as the Padishah's knowledge of French is pretty much on a par with that of a friend of mine, who says he knows French thoroughly, and should understand it perfectly if he could ever find a Frenchman who spoke his own language intelligibly. At the back of the stand, and in the side galleries, were the members of the Diplomatic Corps and their friends; and alongside the stand were pitched a number of marquees for the accommodation of less distinguished members of the Court circle. As soon as the Sultan was seated, a band took up its position opposite the stand, and played without intermission during the whole two hours that the march past lasted. Of

military pageants I know none more monotonous than that of marching past; and save on quite exceptional occasions, like that on which the Prussian army defiled before the King at Austerlitz, after Sadowa, or that when the Army of the Potomac paraded before M'Clellan on the eve of its departure for the Chickahominy—it is difficult to attach any special interest to the movement of a body of troops who are not even going to fire off blank cartridges. I am always forcibly reminded on such occasions of those stage processions, in which the same score of troops march off by the right exit and return by the left entrance; and I own that several times to-day I suspected that my credulity was being imposed upon by the reappearance of regiments which I had already seen march past. The suspicion, though unfounded, was not unnatural. I had expected, at a Turkish review, to behold something of the same gorgeous variety and splendour of uniform that I had witnessed in the military spectacles of Russia. My expectation was entirely disappointed. The whole display may be described in very few words. First came half-a-dozen pioneers with axes; then followed a colonel, bespangled with gilt braid and mounted on a grey Arab steed; then came the band; and then followed some eight double ranks of men two deep, mustering forty strong, marching at intervals of

about twenty yards. Then a somewhat wider gap; then another half a dozen of pioneers; and so on *da capo*. The foremost companies of each regiment gave a cheer as they marched past the Sultan; the others only presented arms.

Nothing could be simpler than the uniform of these Turkish troops. A coarse dark blue serge tunic covered with red braid, loose baggy trousers of the same quality, brown boots of untanned leather, a fez and tassel completed their attire. The officers, of whom there seemed to be about one to every thirty or forty men, had gilt epaulettes, and frock-coats of finer material than the common soldiers' tunics; but otherwise there was little to distinguish them from their men. There were no numbers on the uniforms; and though, doubtless, there must be some distinctive mark between the different regiments, I could not discover it. The flags were of red silk, with a gilt crescent worked in the middle. The soldiers were all stout, vigorous young fellows, small in stature, but lithe and active, aged from twenty to thirty. I saw none who could be under the earlier age, and few, if any, over the last-named. They marched quickly enough, and kept step tolerably well together; though, as it seemed to me, on the few occasions when they met with any halt or check,

they fell out of order with extreme facility. As far as I could reckon, about fourteen thousand infantry defiled in front of the Imperial stand. Then came the artillery, consisting of twenty-two batteries with 132 guns, each drawn by six horses; then followed the second regiment of hussars and lancers, and then a small number of heavy field-pieces. Altogether I should put the number of troops who marched past at about twenty thousand, though I believe the official estimate is higher. As to the efficiency of the troops as soldiers, I could hardly venture to express any opinion. I have seen enough of armies to know that mere look is an imperfect criterion of martial prowess. The finest-looking army I ever saw was that of the ex-King of Naples, which ran away, without striking a blow, before a handful of half-armed volunteers. Still, were I obliged to act upon my own impressions, I should say that these Turkish levies—which I was assured were the very pick of the army—are as inferior to common Russian troops in drill, and discipline, and military air, as the Danish soldiers are to the Prussian. Of course Silistria may be quoted as an argument against me; but if ever I should be a spectator of a fight between Moslems and Muscovites, I should prefer, as a matter not of sentiment, but of regard

for my own safety, to be on the side of the grey-coated Cossacks.

As the last regiments were defiling in front of the stand, the aspect of the scene was singularly beautiful. The hot blazing sun had sunk almost out of sight in the valley, while the hill-sides leading to the camp which were still lit up with the sun's rays, were crossed and re-crossed by long files of troops marching to their tents. Immediately upon the conclusion of the review, the Imperial party re-entered their carriages, and drove off to the Sultan's Kiosk at Beykos, where a state dinner was to be given previous to the illuminations. I walked through the camp, and was much struck by the neatness of the tents, and the good behaviour and order of the troops. They were all in good spirits; for the Sultan had presented them with largesses, rising from a Turkish pound (eighteen shillings) a head, on the occasion of his preliminary inspection of the camp; and it was hoped that he would renew his bounty on this occasion—a consummation the more to be desired, as the poor fellows' pay is eight months in arrear.

The sun had set behind the hills; and the short gloaming had scarcely set in, before the lights began to shine out from the windows of the palace at Beykos.

From basement to roof the building was one blaze of light; and all about the gardens and terraces and balconies you could see lights flitting to and fro, as the hosts of courtiers and servants hurried here and there in attendance upon the banquet. As the daylight faded away, and the stars shone out overhead, large, clear, and lustrous, as they never shine in our hazy northern climes, we watched the mass of light which stood forth amid the darkness, in order to catch the signal for the illumination to begin. Thanks to the kindness of Hobart Pacha, who was charged with the duty of keeping the way clear for the Sultan's yacht, I was on board the pioneer boat of the procession. The *John Smart* is not a romantic or a sentimental name; and the tug which bears it is the exact counterpart of its namesake, owner, captain, and master—the tough, weather-beaten, north-country seaman who has sailed about these waters ever since the Crimean war without losing one jot or tittle of his home gait and look and speech. But the name of John Smart, mariner, will always remain associated in my mind with an idea of surpassing splendour, of exceeding beauty, and fairy-like magnificence. Seat yourself before a common coal fire, gaze into the red caverns, the flickering jets, the showers of sparks, the glow of the flame—try to describe

it mentally in words, and then you will have some notion of the impossibility of depicting in written phrases the valley of fire down which our vessel drifted with the stream. For us, gazing on the scene from the water's edge, it was impossible to fix the time when the darkness gave place to light. If the programme had been carried out, the illumination in the Bay of Beykos would have commenced at a given signal; but no programme ever is adhered to in Turkey, and so one by one the lights twinkled and flickered into sight far and wide. And I am not sure that this gradual transition from night to day was not more beautiful than any sudden blaze of light. At all events, in beauty superlative there are no possible degrees of comparison. Almost before we knew it, the slopes overhanging the palace, on which the camp is pitched, were covered over with a network tracery of light; then between the tracery there burst out masses of red fiery flame, until a sort of half-asleep, half-awake feeling crept over me, and I began to doubt whether it was not all a dream, and I had not just woke up from a troubled sleep while travelling by the night mail through the Black Country at home. From rafts anchored in mid stream there glistened scrolls of fire; then there shot forth showers of rockets. Between

the cliffs were placed batteries bombarding each other in mimic warfare; and red globes of fire shot to and fro from side to side, lighting up, as they whizzed by, the faces of the crowd upon the shore. Towards whatever point in that landlocked bay you turned, you saw dotted over the country-side belts and walls and domes of light; for each building that was lit at all was not contented with a few lamps here and there, but had, so to speak, coated itself with a covering of rows of lamps, till its shape and mass were marked in fire. And while we looked, our vessel, which but a moment before, as it seemed to us, had lain alone and solitary, was surrounded with a fleet of vessels, their rigging all hung with lamps, and bearing down upon us in the still silence of the night. There was something weird and ghost-like about the approach of those lamp-lit steamers, which flitted by crowded with dense masses of dusky faces and dazzling colours, and then drifted away into the shadow of the darkness. On the waters round about us flickered thousands and thousands of tiny lamps, each borne at the prow of the caïques which glided by us, like the boat of Charon carrying the spirits of the dead. Hither and thither our steamer dashed, clearing the passage to be taken by the barges which were to

bring the Imperial party on board the *Piertew-Piale*, but the moment we had passed the flotilla of caïques closed in behind us; and though the lights darted like fire-flies about the landing-place, the Empress still lingered within the palace gardens gazing upon the scene.

Then suddenly, amidst the whiz of the rockets, we heard the sound of sharp volleys of musketry. On the brow of every hill which lined the Bosphorus, soldiers had been stationed; and at the signal for the Sultan's departure they commenced firing in platoons. Against the dark blue sky there darted thousands of little tongues of flame, following each other in such rapid succession that you could trace the outlines of the mountains by the rims of fire which crested them. Then, amid the rattle of the musketry, reverberated again by a hundred echoes, the Sultan's barge stole almost unperceived out from the shore, and the moment that the Empress had embarked, the Imperial yacht started on its journey down the Bosphorus. The lamp lights began to fade rapidly from view as the *John Smart* steamed at full speed in the wake of the *Piertew-Piale*. It seemed cruel to leave the Bay of Beykos behind, with the lights still sparkling in all their glory; but the tongues of fire crept on and on

along the crest of the hills before us; and even as we turned headland after headland, and entered reach after reach, the same gorgeous spectacle unfolded itself before our dazzled eyes. Indeed, as we drew nearer to Stamboul, and the palaces on the water-side grew thicker and closer, the brilliancy of the illumination became more startling. On the slopes you might see palaces, terraces, kiosks, minarets, all of fire; rows of coloured lamps were festooned along the boats; and in the still dark waters you could trace endless columns of reflected lights dwindling down into the depths below. When the crowd of steamers had been left behind, the Sultan's yacht slackened its speed, and slowly we floated down, watching palace after palace twinkle in the distance in its coating of flame, then blaze upon us in its full glory, and then fade out of sight as we drifted on. In days gone by, children used to delight in little cottages, churches, and castles of plaster of Paris, inside of which they stuck a wax candle-end. Looking about me, it seemed as if the distant hills had been sprinkled lavishly with these candle-lit dwellings—which, to my childish mind, used to represent the extreme perfection of beauty. In the more gorgeously illuminated palaces, like that of the Viceroy of Egypt, the colours of the lamps

were somehow made to change, and flushes of red, blue, and green stole in turn over the marble façades.

And at last, when we turned the foot of Mount Boulgourlou, and the Palace of Beylerbey shone out ahead, dazzling with light, there was presented to us perhaps the loveliest spectacle of all. In front of the palace the Ottoman fleet was stationed, with clusters of lamps hung from every yard and rope. In the darkness the hulls of the ships could scarcely be seen; and the fiery masts and glittering festoons of rigging rose, as it seemed, straight from out the water. Blue lights burned at every mast-head; and rockets of every shade and colour were shot out in volleys; and the passenger steamers which had come up with us shot past, speckling the waters, as they went, with a perfect maze of flickering lights. The Empress and the Sultan disembarked both at the same time, making for their palaces on the opposite shores of the Straits. Then we shot ahead, and soon had left the fleet behind. Suddenly, as we turned the point of Galata, the lights vanished as if by magic; and the only illumination remaining was that of the moonbeams glistening on the white walls of Istamboul, on the dark-blue waters of the Golden Horn.

ON THE LEVANT.

Off Alexandria, *October* 24.

In that pleasantest among gossiping books of travel, the "Vacation Rambles" of the late Mr. Justice Talfourd, the learned Judge, if I remember rightly, sums up his narrative of a voyage on the Mediterranean with the verdict that he had never enjoyed four days of his existence so thoroughly as those which he spent coasting along the Riviera in one of the Marseilles steamers. Without altogether accepting that dictum, I think you may fairly say, that, given calm seas, blue skies, and fresh breezes, there are few ways in which you can spend a day or two more pleasantly than in sailing about the Mediterranean. And, having now traversed many portions of that fair tideless sea, I should give the preference to these Levantine waters over which I am drifting, even as I write, with a motion so smooth and even that I should not know we were moving at all, were it not for the vibration of the vessel as the screw revolves. The coasts of the Riviera di Ponente,

and the shores of Sicily, are in themselves more beautiful than any of the landscapes which have unrolled themselves in long succession before me since the good ship *Minieh* steamed slowly round the Seraglio Point, and I saw the domes and minarets of Istamboul sink out of sight in the rays of the setting sun. But to me, as to most travellers from the West, everything in this Levantine land is new and strange with a novelty and strangeness not to be found amidst the Italian waters—while the name of every hill, town, bay, and island is associated with memories richer even than those of the Italian Peninsula.

I am on board the screw steamer *Minieh*, Clyde-built, sailing under the Turkish flag, with an Arab captain, a mongrel crew of Egyptians, Greeks, Maltese, Italian waiters, and a French purser. At the present time I am the only Englishman aboard, not to say the only Christian; at least, I am the only person, among the saloon passengers, who in one way or another does not either profess the Moslem faith, or is not in the service or employ of the Osmanli. As a rule, these Egyptian boats of the "Azizie Misrie" Company are not much frequented by European travellers. I was told beforehand that I should be devoured alive by fleas and mosquitoes, not to mention vermin whose names are not habitually mentioned in

polite society; that I should be starved for want of food, or rather from inability to eat the food provided; and that I should find nobody to whom I could make myself intelligible. With regard to the first objection, I have learnt to take those things as they come; with respect to the second, I have never yet found the country where I could not manage indifferently well with such meat and drink as the natives live upon; and as to communicating with my fellow-passengers, I could do without it at a pinch—though, as I expected, I found there were very few with whom I could not converse by means of scraps of such European languages as are within most old travellers' command. Moreover, when all is said and done, the *Minieh* was the only vessel which sailed at the time I wanted—and by the *Minieh* I meant to go. Nor have I seen reason to repent of my resolution—though I confess that I am not sorry to have missed the opportunity of testing the sea-going merits of the vessel, or rather of its crew, in stormy weather. Meanwhile I have had the opportunity of studying an odd phase of Eastern travel.

The *Minieh* is very long and very narrow. The after-part of the deck is divided into two portions by a thick canvas sail, behind which the women of the deck passengers are concealed. The deck in the bows is set apart

for the sailors; and the deck amidships is reserved for the travellers of distinction, among whom I have the honour to be included. The spaces between these three hurricane decks are filled with all kinds of freight, chiefly baskets of fruit, closed with sand at their mouth, and looking like fascines, which we have taken on board at the various ports where we have stopped. Down in the hold underneath are a score or more of cows, which, I am bound to say, have hay and water in plenty, are not overcrowded, and fare far better than they would have fared on board a Christian steamer. But, though our steamer is very deep down in the water, I fancy that her most profitable freight must consist in the multitude of deck passengers. Amid the baskets and barrels which cover the deck, there lie and squat any number of Turks, most of them pilgrims bound for Mecca. They have brought their own provisions, consisting chiefly of brown bread, grapes, and figs, in baskets with them; and all day—and all night too, for that matter—they sit surrounded with gaily coloured shawls and quilts, eating, sleeping, or smoking, except in the by no means unfrequent intervals when they are engaged in prayer.

The captain is a swarthy, strongly-built Arab, with a perpetual grin on his good-humoured face; he has picked

up three English phrases, "Good night—good morning—very well," which he invariably repeats to me every time we pass each other upon the deck. He has a rosary on which he tells his prayers for an hour together, with his fingers fiddling at the beads held behind his back, while he shouts out orders to his men—the stump of a cigar perpetually stuck between his white ivory-hued teeth. He takes few observations; steers, so far as I can discover, by a sort of rule of thumb; and on the slightest provocation falls into paroxysms of rage with the sailors, which end as rapidly as they begin. However, he has one merit, not common, I am told, among Turkish seamen. He does not leave the look-out to join in the various outbursts of prayer with which the course of the day is marked. The mate—who, like the captain, is distinguished from the common sailors only by the slightly better quality of his dress—knows a good deal of English, and has been for some months in Mr. Laird's works at Birkenhead. Of the two I would trust him more in a storm than the captain; but in smooth-weather sailing he has this disadvantage, that he is never tired of relating to me his experiences of Liverpool, and that it is as much as I can do to make head or tail of his story. He fell among thieves, and did not meet with the good Samaritan. On the Mersey, I learn

there are "very much bad people," and above all "very wicked women." Then we have a young Egyptian official who has studied in Paris, who speaks French indifferently well, drinks wine, and loses no opportunity of assuring the Giaour that he looks upon all the rules and customs of the Moslem as "un tas de bêtises." What with frequent meals and a good deal of sleeping, the day passes not unpleasantly; and our accommodation would be by no means to be complained of, were it not for the cause of all the troubles and inconveniences which the world has known since the days of the Garden of Eden—the presence of women. I don't think that I can be accused of lack of gallantry in wishing that we had not what Paul Bedford used to call a "bit of muslin" on board. Women are, we all know, the charm of existence; but when women are presented to us under the form of veiled bundles, with whom it is not permitted to speak, at whom it is hardly allowable to look, and within range of whom it is not even polite to pass in a confined cabin, then, I venture to think, the feminine element is in the way.

The most illustrious and important of the passengers on board the *Minieh* is a Pacha, who is escorting his harem from Constantinople to Alexandria. Of the eight saloons the doors of which open upon our narrow cabin, six are

occupied by the Pacha and his family—or, to speak more accurately, his families, for they are many. The Irishman, when he was carried in a sedan chair with no bottom to it, remarked that, but for the honour of the thing, he might as well have walked. I might almost say that, though I have had the privilege of a berth in a separate saloon, I might as well, but for the honour of the thing, have been an inmate of the Pacha's harem. As I sit in the cabin writing, the door of each of the various saloons opens in turn, and, with the utmost wish not to see, I cannot help becoming acquainted with the most intimate details of the inner life of the seraglio. In every pantomime there is a stock scene in which a house is shown upon the stage, with any number of doors in the façade, and as fast as one shuts another opens. I often fancy that I am the solitary spectator of a pantomime in which Clown and Columbine, Harlequin and Pantaloon, have attired themselves *à la Turque*, for my especial entertainment. The *dramatis personæ*, as far as I have been able to grasp the plot of the play, are as follow:—

The chief actor, manager, and director is the Pacha himself. I don't think I ever saw a man so fat for his height, or so short in stature for his girth. When he is *en déshabille*, he looks for all the world like one of the

Chinese mandarin figures which are placed upon chimney-pieces, and nod perpetually. Dressed in a chintz bed-gown, festooned round his waist—or what was once his waist—with a red sash, the lower half of his round figure is twice the bulk of his upper. When in full attire he wears a green robe lined with fur, a green turban, and a diamond ring with a stone so large that I cannot but doubt its genuineness. His face would be handsome if it were not so distended with fat; his eyes are bright, his skin white; and I should question whether, unwieldy as he is, he is much over forty. He looks intelligent, and as good-humoured as a man well can be who loves a quiet life and is worried all day long by any number of wives. They tell me on the boat that he has four legitimate spouses; but, besides them, what with concubines, slaves, and servants, he has at least a dozen women who have a vested right to his attention. The four wives—the lawful ones, I mean—are of various ages. There is an old wrinkled beldame who has a cracked voice and a terrible tongue, and who spends her time trotting about with her veil all awry over her face, chattering perpetually and scolding everybody she comes across. The second wife is a woman well on towards forty, with a face already assuming the nutcracker shape, and with a sharp, sour

look which years are sure to develop. Wife number three is a dark, sallow brunette, with bold flashing eyes, and the look of a woman able to hold her own in any position in which she may be placed; while the better half—or better eighth, I suppose I ought to say—number four, is a young, sprightly, dark-eyed damsel of nineteen or twenty, who wears lavender kid gloves with four buttons, and has a white silk parasol lined with black lace, and a veil so tightly bound round her straw sailor's hat that you might take her for a European lady. Each of these four dames has her own separate suite of servants, and most of them have children and nurses, though to whom the families belong I have not been able to discover. There are two pretty fair little children, a boy and a girl, of whom the Pacha is extremely fond; he is always feeding them with cakes, sweets, and fruit, and they have their abode in the largest saloon, where there is also a baby in arms. But besides there is a dark little boy somewhat older, to whom nobody pays much attention, and who is more or less in everybody's way, and evinces a disposition to be friendly with the Giaour which is not to be observed in his more favoured playmates. It is easy enough to guess that he is the Ishmael of the household, though who is the Hagar I cannot tell. It may be the pretty soft-eyed woman I

sometimes catch a glimpse of peeping through the chinks of the doorway, and who, for some reason or other, never appears on deck. But this is surmise only. There are any number of female servants—one of them being a tall negress, dressed in white; the others women who are perpetually trotting to and from one saloon to another, and whose faces can scarcely be seen under their blue cotton shawls, which they keep folded close over their faces.

The service between the harem and the outer world is conducted by three body-servants. The highest in dignity is a black eunuch—very tall and hideously ugly, with protruding under-jaw, a nose flattened to his face, and immense blubber lips—who spends his time perpetually in one saloon or another, but only waits upon the ladies, in the way of bringing food or lighting their pipes, as a matter of favour and condescension. Next in rank comes a good-looking young fellow, with a trim moustache, who acts as a sort of major-domo and valet to the Pacha, who is on the best of terms with all the ladies, and is always talking with them through the doors, and fetching and carrying for them, though he never enters the saloons—at any rate, when anybody is looking. And, last not least, there is a wretched little scrub of any age between ten and twenty, a sort of Turkish "Smike," who acts as nursemaid to all the

children, is bullied by all the nurses, cuffed by the eunuch, and run off his legs by everybody, till I wonder sometimes that he does not make a hole in the water and betake himself to a better world. Possibly on shore his life is not so hard as it is on board ship, where all his mistresses are cross, bored, and out of temper. I hope so, at any rate for the credit of human nature. But, even with the assistance of his male attendants, the life of the Pacha is by no means an easy one. There is always something going wrong in some one of the cabins, and the podgy little man has to trot down from the deck scores of times during day to set things aright below stairs. The steward tells me that during all his voyages in the Levant he has never travelled with a party of Turkish ladies who were so quiet or so well-behaved. If so, depend upon it, the days are not always halcyon days even for a Pacha of many tails.

All through the morning the cabin is in a state of perpetual worry and confusion. Some article of toilet is wanted, or an excursion has to be made to somebody else's cabin, or the pipe has gone out, or the contents of the water-jugs are exhausted, or the beds have to be made, or the breakfast has not appeared in due order, or the children are crying; and for one cause or another there is a perpetual rapping at the doors, a jabbering and rustling, all

the mid-day hours. When Count Bismarck was attacked by neuralgia at Nikolsburg, one of the Prussian generals condoled with him. "My dear friend," was the answer, "it is quite a relief to have the tic-douloureux, after being nagged at all day by a pack of old women"—I am afraid he alluded to the Queens Dowager and Regnant of Prussia —"as I was at Potsdam." After somewhat the same fashion, I can truly say that it would be a relief to write, as I have done before now, with the whirr of shells exploding in the next street, rather than be obliged to try and concentrate my thoughts in the midst of a Babel of women's voices, quarrelling about anything and nothing. And if this is my feeling as an indifferent spectator and listener, what must it be for the Pacha, who has all these women tied to him like tin kettles to a dog's tail! However, there is an end to everything, even to a scolding woman's tongue; towards mid-day, when the heat is stifling, there is a sort of siesta on board the boat; and when the noonday sleep is over, the Pacha quits the saloon where the chief wives are assembled, and comes forth in the glory of his green robes and turban, has his narghilé brought up on deck, squats upon a carpet, and smokes placidly. Then after a little time the ladies of the harem come up, escorted by their servants, laden with folds of shawls; and, after much

arranging and re-arranging of pillows and cushions, they, too, seat themselves apart in a sort of circle, within the range of the Pacha's eyes, and smoke cigarettes, or even chibouks, and drink coffee and use their eyes freely.

Indeed, of all the times in the day, that in which they seem to be the liveliest and most at ease is the hour of evening prayer. As the sun begins to sink near the horizon, you see jugs of water brought in quaint-shaped earthen vases, and poured over the feet of the Pacha and the more important Turks; while the poorer passengers simply stretch their bare feet over the vessel's side, and souse them with water ladled by their own hands from open basins. As the sun sinks, the signal for prayer is given from the chapel—if I may so style a sort of enclosure which a number of grey-bearded Turks have set apart for themselves between the bulwarks and the hutch cabin belonging to the captain. They have so fenced the place round with baskets, bundles of shawls, and boxes; they squat there themselves so unweariedly day and night; they glower so at any Giaour who ventures there in pursuit of shade—that they have securely established there the head-quarters of their open-air prayer-meetings. At early dawn, at noon, at mid-afternoon, at sunset, and at

nightfall they call the faithful together to worship Allah. But, for some cause or other, the sunset prayer is the best attended and the most fervent. As the last rays of the sun fade from the sky, you hear an old man's voice groaning out a low monotonous chant, rising louder and louder till his voice dies away, and the song is taken up by another aged singer. At the sound the Turks come trooping in from all quarters of the ship, some with slippers, carrying their shoes in their hands; others with bare feet; as they arrive one by one, they form themselves into rows of three or four, parallel to each other, and all, with their faces turned towards Mecca, spread out their carpets before them, and kneel with their foreheads bowed down to the ground. There seems to be a little amicable discussion as to which of the Mollahs present shall lead the prayer; and when the point of precedence is settled, one of the oldest men steps a step forward and begins to recite verses from the Koran in a low recitative. From time to time he bows down, touching the planks with his forehead, and his example is straightway followed by all the other worshippers. For a minute or so there will be a dead stillness, till the bowed heads are raised slowly, and then the chorus of voices bursts forth again louder and clearer. So it goes on; the prostrations becoming more frequent,

the articulation more rapid, the swell of voices fuller, with each interval of rest—until at last the worshippers appear to be carried away by the excitement of their devotion and the long wailing sing-song melody of the prayer is interspersed with groans, unearthly cries, and a sort of spasms of sound. Then all of a sudden, when they seem to have reached the very pitch of religious frenzy, and you begin to feel an unpleasant suspicion that they may suddenly fall upon the Giaour and slay him then and there, the leader of the prayer rises up quietly, and the worshippers pick up their slippers and walk off tranquilly to their different resting-places. Common respect for every act of worship, as well as a natural desire to avoid any unpleasantness, induces the Frankish minority to abstain from laughing or loud talking during the utterances of these prayers. But the reverential effect of the ceremony is somewhat marred by the utter unconcern and indifference with which it is regarded by the Turkish women. Not being permitted to join in the prayers, they pay no kind of attention to them, and chatter and glance about in the certainty that their lords and masters are occupied for the moment. During the prayer hour the younger of the women speak freely to such of the passengers on board as are not occupied with their devotions.

In the course of our voyage, we have picked up and dropped again a variety of passengers. We have had a couple of Boston citizens "doing" the East with the same business energy as they would display in the sale of dry goods; we have had English Smyrna merchants; we have had a Greek family who have been spending the summer in the islands, and who, after the fashion of their race, have made themselves as disagreeable to the Turks as their opportunities permitted; but the prominent figure among our *personnel* is the Pacha with four wives. Of dirt and discomfort I will say nothing. Picture to yourself a cabin twenty feet by six, crowded with Turkish women, children, and servants, with a whole family of Greeks, who lie all day upon the floor, round about the dinner table. Throw in a number of babies and nurses. Suppose that washing is unknown—and if it were known would not be practicable. Imagine all the disagreeable nuisances and abominations of which the public seems to relish the narration when the scene is the casual ward of a London union; add dry, reeking heat, foul air, and fouler odours—and you will have some vague conception of the voyage I have just ended.

Yet, with all this, the dominant impression left upon my mind in connexion with the journey is one of exceeding

beauty. After all, we must eat our peck of dirt; and though the process of eating is unpleasant, the dish when digested leaves no sours behind. But the long voyage through the Archipelago has furnished me with a whole series of mental photographs not soon to be forgotten. It is true that each scene is somehow mixed up with every other in a sort of dissolving view. One morning, I know we were floating slowly through the channel of the Dardanelles; all day we skirted the Troad shore, and at night we were anchored off Mitylene. Then with early dawn we lay in the Bay of Smyrna, and the evening had faded into night as we cast anchor near Chio. Then for a long, sultry day, we skirted island after island—Samos and Patmos, and a score of others, each of whose names was as a household word, rose into sight and faded from view and as the moon rose like a ball of fire out of the east, we were coasting the shores of Rhodes. Then, at last, we were in the open sea, out of sight of land, and all day we steamed on over the blank expanse of blue water, till the daybreak found us in sight of the low line which marks the Egyptian coast. And all day long and every day we have had the same glass-like sea—the same blue sky overhead, the same cobalt water underneath, the outline of

every island and coast that we sighted in turn seeming fairer in form, deeper in tint, richer in colour than that which went before. The Pillar of Pompey is in sight, and the voyage of the *Minieh* is ended.

THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM.

HEAVY clouds hung over the mountain coast of Palestine as we lay in the roads of Jaffa, waiting for the boats to come alongside, which were to land us on the sandy beach over whose smooth waters the white breakers broke angrily. We had left behind us the changeless blue skies, the glowing heat, the gorgeous colours of Egypt, and, in lieu thereof, we had cloudy skies, chill, damp winds, and drizzling rain. Still the change was not altogether unpleasant. The British tar who, on entering the Irish Channel after a cruise among the Azores, thanked Heaven that he had seen the last of that beastly blue sky, expressed a sentiment not unintelligible to our English race; and there was something of a home-like feeling about the fresh moist wind, which sent the waves breaking merrily on the shores of Judea. At last the yellow flag, which denoted that we had not yet received "pratique," was lowered from the mizen-mast of the Russian steamer, the *Alexander II.*,

which had brought us from Alexandria, and forthwith our deck was swarmed by a hundred Arabs, shouting, yelling, cuffing, hustling, bullying, as if they were so many Corsairs, and we were the captives of their spear, about to be divided among the horde and sold off into slavery in Barbary. But the bark of these Arabs is worse than their bite. Experience has taught me that all their screams, kicks, and howls do not end, as you expect at first, in a free fight all round, and that if you keep quiet you will get out of the skirmish, mulcted only in a few paras or piastres, according to your Excellency's generosity of disposition. It always strikes me as an odd instance of how the Cross has triumphed over the Crescent, that while the Arabs kick and cuff each other unmercifully, and are kicked and cuffed in turn by every European, from the captain to the cabin boy, the contingency of an Arab's lifting his hand against a European not only never occurs, but is never even contemplated as possible.

A long pull across the waters, over which our boat rolls, pitches, and tosses, as the Arab boatmen rise to their oars to a low sing-song tune, the time being marked by the clapping of the hands of a lot of loafers, who sprawl in the bows among the luggage; a sharp jerk which half shakes us off our seats as we shoot the narrow passage through

the breakwater of rocks which lines the port of Jaffa; a scramble, a yell of screams, a final hand-to-hand scrimmage between boatmen, guides, porters, and dragomans—and we are standing upon the soil of the Holy Land. The mode of approach is not favourable to contemplative reflection; and though we are in the city where Simon the tanner lived—you may see the house if you are so minded—where St. Peter saw the vision of the net descending from heaven, holding beasts clean and unclean, and whence the Prophet Jonah set sail for Tarshish, your first thought and care is to escape from the swarm of land-sharks—who pester you with offers of conveyances to Jerusalem, rosaries from the Mount of Olives, souvenirs of the Holy Land, tobacco-pouches, certificates of good character, and Bedouin head-dresses made at Manchester—and to find refuge within the walls of the Jerusalem Hotel. Indeed, I may remark here, that of the peculiar associations attaching to the scenes I am now visiting, the less said in letters such as these the better. If you feel their force and power, they are not things to write about; if you do not, they are still less matter for idle comment. In writing of the Holy Land, I see no reason why I should depart from my accustomed rule, which is to write of things even as I see them with my own eyes, not with the eyes of others. If you

wish for narratives of Judean travel, adorned with paraphrases of Scripture stories, telling in enthusiastic language the sensations of the writers as they travel the land of Holy Writ, you have no lack of choice, from the pages of M. de Lamartine to those of Mr. Hepworth Dixon. Here you will find little beyond the record of what I have seen and noted.

There is, then, no Frank quarter in the town of Jaffa. It is Eastern in the matchless beauty of its position; Eastern, also, in the squalor of its gloomy, narrow, winding streets. The houses are of stone, one storeyed, flat-roofed, with small iron-barred windows and dark doorways, through which you catch glimpses of courtyards surrounded with pillars. The air of decay and desolation common to all Turkish towns is present everywhere. The one trade which seems to flourish is that of dragomans, valets-de-place, touts, guides, beggars, or by whatever name you describe the avocation of baaksheesh-hunters. It was market day, and the streets leading to the gates were filled with pedlars' stalls full of cheap cotton stuffs, rough cutlery, Brummagem jewellery, and tawdry frippery. I don't know how I can better describe the contents of these Jaffa stalls than by saying that, looking at them to find some of those local knick-knacks which travellers

collect as reminiscences of their journey, I could see nothing which you might not buy on the stalls of any French or English village fair. The hucksters were Jews, with the long corkscrew ringlets on either side their faces, which in Poland, Russia, and Hungary, as in Judea, form the badge of the race. But they plied their trade languidly; the *genius loci*, the apathy of the Turk, is too strong to be resisted even by the native energy of the Hebrew.

Outside the Jerusalem Gate the merchants of grain and green stuffs, the vendors of dates, bananas, and sugar-canes, had pitched their mart. The camels lay kneeling by the sides of great heaps of fruit piled upon the ground; the Turkish merchants squatted alongside, puffing at their narghilés: and women, barefooted and barearmed, with silver bangles upon their wrists, and blue tattooed marks on their chins and foreheads, were selling market produce; dusky children of all ages rolled about half-naked —sometimes much more than half-naked—in the sand. The whole scene was of the East, Eastern; and then, through a lane bordered with impenetrable hedges of prickly pear, we came on to a Yankee settlement. Some few years ago there was a half-crazed Methodist in the United States—I think in the State of Maine—who took

it into his head that the Millennium was at hand; that the chosen people were about to return forthwith to the Holy Land, and that the Elect were likely to be left out in the cold, unless they took up their quarters in Judea before the rush came. A certain number of his countrymen became persuaded that truth was spoken by this new Peter the Hermit, and so a little colony of Yankee farmers came out to Jewry. They never got beyond Jaffa, where they laid the foundation of what was meant to be a thriving Western city. Their wooden houses were fashioned as closely as might be after the likeness of the plank dwellings of the West. The walls were painted white, the window shutters green, and the houses were placed so as to form a series of straight streets, running parallel with or at right angles to each other. They started a grocery store, a free school, a bar, and a stage plying between Jaffa and Jerusalem. But somehow the Millennium did not come to date. The settlers quarrelled among themselves about the interpretation of the prophecies, and after a time the colony, to use an American phrase, "burst up." Most of the houses are now deserted; the best of them has been turned into a French hotel; but there are still a few of the original settlers left stranded about the place, and there is something strangely quaint in coming

from the picturesque Oriental squalor of Jaffa to the trim Yankee houses outside the town, where the white linen is hung out to dry upon ropes in the gardens, and where hard-featured men and fair, sallow-faced women may be seen working in the very hottest of the day.

It takes a long time to settle the simplest arrangement in the East; and though we landed early at Jaffa, it was late in the afternoon before we could get anything ready to start upon our journey to Jerusalem. Between the two places there runs now a good high road, the longest and the best of the half-dozen roads which exist in the dominions of the Sultan. It was completed, at the cost of the villages along the route, about a year ago, and it has recently been placed in thorough order for the journey of the Emperor of Austria. It might be traversed with perfect ease by a light coach; and, indeed, the Jaffa and Jerusalem stage got over the ground well enough while it was allowed to run, but the interest of the dragomans who supply mules and horses were threatened by the competition of the coach; influence was brought to bear upon the Turkish authorities, and no stage is now allowed to ply for hire between the capital of Judea and the coast. From a romantic point of view, the prohibition is not to be regretted. But when every bone in your body aches

from the jolting of a five-and-thirty miles' ride on the back of the roughest of pack-horses, you are inclined to be utilitarian in your views. Still, the toil and the discomfort of the weary journey are made up for, to some degree, by the peculiar beauty of the first hour's ride out of Jaffa. Round about the coast there runs a perfect belt of verdure. The orange-trees had just put on their gorgeous livery of glistening green and golden yellow; the palm-trees, whose branches droop here as nature bids them, were heavy with their red bunches of dates; the prickly pears were bursting into flower; the pomegranate shrubs had not yet been rifled of all their treasure; the whole country-side was covered with a mass of foliage almost tropical in its richness. Olive-trees and cypresses mingled their dark hues with the lighter shades of the acacias and the pepper-trees. There were wells and fountains at every turn; the high road was full of groups of country folk, with strings of camels and donkeys jogging homewards from the markets; the mule bells rung out merrily; the fading sunlight gleamed brightly on the landscape; and we seemed to have come in sober truth into the land flowing with milk and honey.

The illusion was not of long duration. Before the sea lay a couple of miles behind us, we had passed beyond the

fruitful zone. The gardens, orchards, and palm-groves were succeeded by great bare fallow plains, dotted over with little patches of tilled field, growing rarer and rarer as we rode onwards. It was not that the soil had changed or that the supply of water had dried up. There is rain enough in Judea to supply the absence of artificial irrigation; all that is wanted to convert into a garden the district which stretches westward from the sea to the foot of the mountain range, dividing Judea lengthways, is a supply of labour and protection for the fruits of industry. Under Turkish rule, however, the population does not increase; all enterprise is discouraged; and so the most fruitful portions of the Holy Land remain a wilderness. On we rode in the dusk of the evening over an endless series of low rolling hills rising one behind the other from out the eastern plain till we had distanced the market folk, and even the olive-groves could be seen no longer on the bleak hill-sides; then at length we crested the last hill, and the domes and minarets of Ramleh—our quarters for the night—rose before us. There are few sights finer than the view of these Turkish towns, with their great masses of white buildings, their groves of trees between the roofs, their high walls and higher towers; there is nothing more disappointing than the contrast

between the grandeur without and the sordid squalor within. Ramleh is the chief town on the great high road to Jerusalem, and in itself is a place of no small importance as times go in Judea; but inn or tavern there is none, and travellers have either to sleep in their tents outside or to throw themselves upon the hospitality of the convents. Happily, that hospitality is afforded freely. As English, our party—heretical though our faith might be—were entitled to the good offices of the Franciscan Convent, and there we found board and lodging for the night. Our horses were fed and stabled; we had sleeping apartments with iron bedsteads and mosquito curtains; we had a regular dinner, with wine and coffee; and for all this we were not compelled to pay a single sixpence. Nothing could be more courteous than the manner of our hosts; and, if we had chosen to ride off without any pecuniary acknowledgment of our night's welcome, we should have been dismissed with the same grave blessing that was given us on our departure. As it was, the sum we presented towards the support of the convent was about the quarter of what our night's entertainment would have cost us at any local hotel: and yet for that we received the especial thanks of the lay brethren, who escorted us to the doorway. The pilgrims, who form the bulk of the convent's guests, pay

nothing; and altogether the Franciscans of Ramleh must make a poor business, so far as money goes, out of their hospitality. "I always make it a rule," an Italian fellow-traveller remarked to me at Ramleh, "to lodge at a convent in the East. It is so much more poetical than staying at an hotel; and then, you know, it is also so much cheaper."

The sun had not risen before we were on the trot again, on our way to Jerusalem. The rain and the clouds had cleared away, and the feeling of cold winds and chattering teeth had something novel in it, after the baking, melting heat of Alexandria. Of that long weary day's journey the one dominant impression which has survived in my mind above the prevailing sense of fatigue is one of intense solitude, desolation, barrenness. It was early morning as we galloped out of Ramleh; the afternoon was far advanced as our horses stumbled, lame and footsore, over the slippery stones of Jerusalem; and yet throughout that day's journey we passed through only one village. On the hill-sides we sighted a few towns perched far away. We rode by two or three roadside taverns where food was provided for pilgrims. But beyond this we came across no sign of human habitations; and for miles upon miles there was nothing beyond the high road over which we jolted to show

us that we were passing through an inhabited country. Every now and then, in the hollows of the valleys, there was a little oasis of green, a knot of gnarled olive-trees, a stray palm, a trellis-work of vines. But these oases, few and far between, disappeared altogether as we began to rise higher and higher towards the hills which surmount Jerusalem. Of traffic along the road there was little or nothing. If I except two parties of tourists whom I met on their road from Jerusalem, I can hardly recall meeting a score of wayfarers from the time we left Ramleh till we came under the walls of the Holy City. Not a cross-road, scarcely a bridle-path, debouched into the main thoroughfare. If the scheme for a railway from Jerusalem to Jaffa should ever be carried out, there is no single spot between the capital and Ramleh where a station could be made for any other purpose than that of a depôt for coal or water.

As we went on and on, the scenery grew wilder, the hills barer, the desolation more complete. Each bleak hill-side was succeeded by another yet more bleak and cheerless. We journeyed in a sort of treadmill fashion, going up one steep ascent after another, in order to go down a descent well-nigh as steep and lengthy. For some time our course lay over broad

rolling hillocks, not unlike the lowlands of Scotland, supposing those districts to be stripped of all their culture. Next we came into a long winding gorge, whose grey boulder-covered slopes grew ever steeper and steeper, till it seemed as though there would be no passage left between them; then we dipped into a deep valley, climbed over a high ridge, and sank down again, yet deeper still, into another cleft between two steep ridges and then, by a long series of never-ending zigzags, we toiled slowly and wearily up the eastern slope of the further range. The sky had clouded over; a white mist had settled down on the hill-tops; and a slow trickling drizzle poured down as we proceeded upwards. The two small watch-house towers, which had been pointed out to us as the end of our labour, seemed never to come nearer; the stones lay greyer, barer, and thicker than ever upon the slopes; and our horses' pace became slower and slower as bend after bend of the winding road carried us slowly towards the summit. Then, at length, we reached a sort of bare table-land, upon whose horizon the towers stood undivided from us by any gulf or valley. The clouds cleared, the sun came out, our horses were urged on into a shambling gallop, which broke down rapidly into a shuffling trot, and died away

into a hobbling walk; and we stood upon the brow of the hill which overhangs Jerusalem.

I have read descriptions without end of the sentiments called up by the first glimpse of the Holy City, as seen from the Jaffa road. I think it is the author of Eöthen who says that to look upon that view is one of the epochs of a man's lifetime; and even the most careless and indifferent of spectators cannot fail to be impressed there by the thought that he is looking on the city which Christian and Jew alike hold to be sacred beyond all others, a city whose name is woven up for ever with the story of the human race. But apart from the flood of memories which must rise unbidden to the spectator's mind as he gazes upon the walls of Zion, there is little or nothing that I could see in this world-famed view to heighten the sensation of the moment. Far away, indeed, in the distance there stretches the vast purple range of cliff, beneath which the Jordan rolls its waters into the Sea of Sodom. Otherwise, all you look upon is tame, uninteresting, shabby. I had fancied, from the accounts I had read, that you actually looked down from these heights upon Jerusalem. It is not so in fact. The city lies hidden from you by the slope of the hill on which it nestles; and all you see are the long, low,

crenelated walls, with their flimsy-looking battlements skirting the edge of a broad shelving slope. The space between you and the walls—a mile or so in breadth—has not even the barren grandeur belonging to every large open space. The first objects which catch your eye as you gaze eagerly to take in the aspect of Jerusalem, are a number of huge whitewashed barrack-looking buildings belonging to that peculiar style of bastard architecture devoted in England to union workhouses and county hospitals. They are the Russian convents and schools, and their unsightly hideousness stares at you from every point to which you turn. So, too, along the roadside leading right up to the city, there runs a suburb of chapels, dwelling-houses, and tombs, all modern in their glaring whiteness—modern, too, in their unsuccessful attempt at cheap architectural adornment. Most persons know the look of Brighton as you approach it from the land-side, coming in at the back of the town towards the Montpelier Road. To make the comparison may be detrimental to my repute for imagination, but I own that the Montpelier Road suggested itself to me as I looked upon the approach to Jerusalem.

Our horses pricked up their ears as the end of their journey came into view; and we trotted on, leaving the

great piles of the Muscovite convents behind us, till we reached the Jaffa Gate, where the Turkish flags fluttered above a whitewashed guard-house. Then we turned sharp to the left, and picked our way carefully along the moat at the foot of the walls, stumbling with every step, as our horses trod upon the loose stones with which the moat is filled; and lastly we passed under a low doorway cut in the walls, which bears the name of the Damascus Gate. Over our heads, as we went through the opening, there hung a wooden crescent, placed there as a framework for lamps when the city was illuminated on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph. Fancy the successor of the Crusaders, his Most Catholic and Apostolic Majesty, welcomed on his visit to Jerusalem by an illuminated crescent! So, beneath the sacred symbol of Islam we also made our way into the Holy City, slid down a street so steep and slippery that our horses' hoofs could find no footing; and at the courtyard of the Mediterranean Hotel our journey ended.

THE MODERN ZION.

JERUSALEM.

FROM the window of the room in which I write I have a view of the Holy City. As I look out, I see upon my left a steep hill-side banked in with stone walls, covered with little patches of terrace-gardens, each with a small, square, box-shaped stone house standing in the midst of it. Up the slope there winds a broken flight of steps, over whose loose, slippery stones barefooted friars, veiled Moslem women, Arabs, Jews, and Turkish soldiers, are passing all day long. Right in front of my window is a bran-new Austrian convent—a well-proportioned block of stonework, with conduit pipes, Venetian blinds, and neat ogive windows—very clean and bright to look at, very comfortable, no doubt, to live in, but new of the newest, modern of the most modern. Round the convent runs a cabbage-garden, in which a black-robed priest is walking, reading as he walks, with downcast eyes. On the right, I look over a confused mass of low egg-shaped domes,

some of concrete, some of brick, others of stone, all brown and sun-baked; from the summit of most of them there rises a little weathercock-looking crescent. These are the roofs of the houses of Jerusalem; and though streets, or rather alleys, wind between them, yet they are so small and narrow that, looking down, I can see no break or gap in the rows of domes rising one above the other. In the distance are a minaret and a grove of cypress-trees; and far away against the sky stretches the pale blue line of the mountains of Moab.

Such is the view on which I look. It is a pretty view. I have never yet looked upon any portion of an Eastern town which an artist might not wish to preserve among his sketches. But here, if you except the trim stone convent, which belongs of right to the West, not to the East, there is nothing in the view to distinguish it from that of any other Oriental city. I dwell upon this window outlook of mine, because it illustrates what seems to me the peculiarity of Jerusalem — the absence from it of any distinctive local character. Given a good deal of the imaginative faculty, and you can, of course, invest every stone over which you tread with the glamour and glory of the old Bible days. In lack of imagination, given a large dose of "make-believe," and you can persuade yourself—

or other people—that you are deeply impressed with the odds and ends of historic ruins or relics to which your attention is called. But, if you possess an unfortunate faculty for seeing things as they are, and calling them by their proper names, you can hardly conceal from yourself that the town of Jerusalem does not rank high in the list of the world's wonders. The Colosseum at Rome, the Acropolis at Athens, the Bull tombs at Sekarah, carry you back at once to the days when Rome, Athens, and Memphis were in their pride; and merely to look on these buildings gives you a sort of insight into the real aspect of those cities in their best days, which no amount of book-lore can ever impart. But when, after walking about the streets of the Jerusalem of to-day, I try to realize what the city, over whose beauty Christ wept, must have been like eighteen centuries ago, I can find no data on which to build my mental fabric. There is in all Jerusalem no edifice, no monument, no mass of ruins even, which dates from the days when Christ walked on earth, to say nothing of the days of David and of Solomon. No doubt, in exchange, you have any number of relics, traditions, memorials. There is not an incident in Holy Writ of which you are not shown the exact site and locality. Your *valet de place* drones out to you a long catalogue of

spots which the Saviour or His disciples have hallowed by their presence. Along the Via Dolorosa men point out to you dints in the wall, and tell you they were made by the cross as it was borne to Calvary; they show you the palace in which Dives lived, the hovel hard by where Lazarus had his dwelling, the stone on which the thirty pieces of silver were counted out to Judas, the rock which the Messiah touched with His foot as He ascended into heaven, leaving thereon a miraculous impress by the mere act of touch; and so on *ad infinitum*. It is possible, it is even probable, that some one of the countless traditions which associate particular spots with particular events recorded in Holy Writ may be correct. Indeed, the law of chances would lead one to assume that, considering the smallness of the town, some one or more of the many spots assigned as the sites of different incidents must happen to be rightly denominated. But the utter uncertainty which prevails concerning the accuracy of all these traditions, including even that which assigns its position to the Holy Sepulchre, inevitably suggests an unpleasant doubt whether you are not looking at the wrong site. I do not perhaps realize very thoroughly why I should be carried away by my feelings even if I am looking at the very identical slab on which St. Peter stood

when he drew the sword; but, if I am to be so impressed by the mere fact that the slab on which I look is this very identical slab and no other, I must be sure about its authenticity.

How all this may affect minds differently constituted from my own, I do not pretend to say; but to me there is something painful and disenchanting about the act of sightseeing in the Holy City. To speak the truth, Jerusalem, as you see it now, is nothing more nor less than a permanent fair of rival peep-shows; the curiosities exhibited being associated, with or without reason, with all the names and memories that Christian men hold most sacred. Every spot, from the Garden of Gethsemane downwards, is a show place, kept under lock and key to be visited with a guide, to be explained by a *valet de place*, to be paid for after inspection in one form or another of bakscheesh. Every tradition-honoured spot has its custodian, who vaunts its authenticity as a pedlar guarantees his wares. Everybody has chaplets, beads crosses, rosaries, to dispose of, all of which are warranted to have been laid upon the stones of the Holy Sepulchre. The trade of Jerusalem is in relics; its sacred antiquities are all exhibited for bakscheesh; its population lives upon the superstitions of fanatics and the needs of pilgrims

and thus, even about the sites which to all men, no matter what their faith may be, must be reckoned amongst the earth's holy places, there hangs a savour of the showman's booth, a smack of the huckster's stall. You go into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Inside the doorway are the carpets of the Turkish soldiers, where they lie throughout the hours when the shrine is open, to keep some sort of order among the different communions between whom the building is parcelled out. Every inch of ground, every square foot of wall, is disputed for by the Greek, Latin, and Armenian Churches. The crown of thorns is the property of one, the holy cross of another, the garment without rent or seam of a third. The arches on which the vast cupola is supported are allotted equally to the three. On one side of a line Catholics offer up their prayers, on the other Greek Popes strive to outpray their Latin rivals; the Armenian will not kneel before the altar over which hangs the graven image of Christ upon the cross; the Greek will not bow to any image of the Saviour except one painted on flat board or canvas. And in every shrine the priests of the conflicting faiths beg for alms for the support and sustenance of the one true and orthodox Church of Christ. The chapel in which the sepulchre itself is supposed to lie is the only

spot in the whole edifice common alike to all Christian creeds; and even here the freedom of common worship is maintained only by the presence of Mussulman guards.

Still, the Holy Sepulchre itself is redeemed from the show character attaching to most other sights of Jerusalem by the presence of the pilgrims. They, at any rate, are not mere tourists or sentimental sightseers. At the time I visited the shrine it was crowded with Muscovite peasants, who had come from the interior of Russia to visit the Saviour's grave. Barefooted, ragged, dusty, forlorn, bewildered-looking, they were gathered there—men, women, and young children—herded together like a flock of sheep. About them there was no pretence of devotion, no shadow of doubt, no thirst for lucre. You could see them prostrate on the floor, kissing the stones, sobbing out gasps of prayer, dragging themselves upon their faces to the Holy of Holies, praying as they crawled along. Their act of worship might be superstitious, but it was true and real. So, from the same cause, the most impressive memory I shall ever carry with me from Jerusalem is that of the Jews weeping before the walls of Zion. The Hebrew population is said, in guide-books, to be about one-third of that of the whole city. From the number of Jewish dresses and faces in the streets, I should have

doubted the proportion being nearly so large. The Jews of Zion are neither prosperous, active, nor influential; and as Moslem and Christians, disagreeing in everything else, agree in oppressing the children of Israel, they have a hard time of it in the city of their fathers. No native Jew can enter the precincts of the temple, where now stands the Mosque of Omar, without the risk of being maltreated and stoned, if his presence is detected by the Mussulman. Once a week, however, and once a week only, the Jews are permitted by the Turks to come and pray at the foot of one of the high stone walls on which the plateau of Solomon's Temple is supported. The hour of prayer is fixed, whether by chance or irony, upon the Mussulman's Sabbath; and at that hour the Jews flock to the narrow strip of ground, enclosed between high walls, where alone they can pray in public for the coming of the Messiah, and the restoration of the chosen people to the Promised Land. There are a few Rabbis, clad in long fur-lined cloaks and low-crowned velvet caps; but the great bulk of the worshippers are aged men and women of the poorer sort, meanly dressed in coarse woollen stuffs; the men with long grey greasy coats and greasier ringlets, the women with cheap striped cotton petticoats, and white linen hoods bound over their heads.

Men and women stand apart; the worshippers, as they each arrive, taking up their station close to the wall, with their faces buried as far as may be in its slits and fissures. All along the line there rises a murmur of wailing cries and sobs. There are few amongst the company who have not Hebrew books of prayer in their hands, out of which they recite long strings of words chanted to a low sing-song tune. From time to time some one of the elders reads out a prayer, and at each pause the chorus of men and women join in with a long wailing cry. But, as a rule—so it seemed to me—each person prayed after his own fashion, and the voices rose and fell in a constant ebb and flow of sound; but, as worshipper after worshipper turned away slowly from the wall, after kissing it repeatedly, you could see tears running down their wrinkled cheeks. The Turkish soldiers were lounging on the parapet of the wall above. In former years, they would throw down stones upon the Jews as they stooped in prayer, or insult them with opprobrious names. Now the power of the West is too much dreaded for the Moslem official to venture upon the exhibition of his contempt for the unbeliever. But, amongst the common folk, who have not the terror of the Pacha before their eyes, the old hatred of creed still survives. On the day when I visited

the place of wailing, a group of dark-eyed, bold-faced, stalwart Arab women sat, with their children, in the corner of the pathway whereon the Jews were praying. An old Jewish dame, very feeble, bent, and wrinkled, laid her large hide-bound folio prayer-book on a stone beside her, while she buried her head within a hole in the wall; forthwith one of the Arab girls stole up stealthily and carried off the book in triumph. The old Jewess, when she discovered her loss, begged and prayed for its return, but was told she could not have her book again unless she paid five piastres—about a shilling—to the girl who had stolen it. There was wrangling and whining for ever so long; but the Arab girl stood firm; the Jewish women were afraid to touch her; and at last they made up the sum amongst themselves by odd half-pence, and handed it to the impudent young hussey, who pocketed the coin, and then announced that now she should not return the prayer-book, as she saw the old hag valued it, till she had had double the price named. Seeing that our party were strangers, one of the Jewesses came up to me, and asked me, in German, to help them to get the prayer-book back. I volunteered, through my dragoman, to pay the couple of shillings which was needed to redeem the book; but the Arab wench raised her terms again, and stood out

for more. Happily a threat that I would take the old woman at once to the English Consul—like many other unmeaning menaces in this world of ours—succeeded where persuasion had failed; and the girl, pouring forth a volley of abuse against myself, the Bible, and the Jewish race, raised up the prayer-book into the air, threw it as hard as she could fling right into the midst of the group of Jewesses, and then ran down the hill laughing loudly. Happily the book struck nobody; and the number of blessings I received as I strolled away ought to stand me in good stead. I remember, when a little boy, being told as a moral lesson the story of the polite, well-bred young man who picked up the Prayer-book of an old lady in church and was left a large fortune by her years after, though he had never met her or heard of her again. I wonder whether I shall some day get a letter from a Jerusalem notary to certify that I am the sole legatee of an aged Hebrew dame lately interred in the Valley of Jehoshaphat? If so, I am afraid the legacy will consist of little beyond the prayer-book I rescued from the clutches of the Moslem.

THE SHRINES OF THE HOLY LAND.

MAR SAABA.

A WORK exists bearing this title, "What to Eat, Drink, and Avoid," which—the title, not the work—has always impressed me as being the production of a man of genius. Any common author could have described a treatise on things edible and potable by the title "what to eat and what to drink;" but the addition of "what to avoid" betrays the hand of a master. I wonder when any writer will bring out a guide-book based upon the same sound principle as that of the pamphlet to which I have referred! What you want to know in a foreign land is not so much what to see, as what not to see. After you have served a certain apprenticeship in the art of travel, you learn the great truth that you had much better not see nine-tenths of the stock sights you are expected to visit in any new country you may chance to traverse. I do not say this as an advocate of the "all is vanity" theory of life; on the contrary, the more you see of the world's wonders and marvels, the stronger—I speak judging from myself—be-

comes the craving to behold all that this fair earth of ours has of grand, rare, and beautiful. But, when you have seen one great spectacle, when you have experienced one great sensation, to be called upon to stare at a hundred inferior imitations of the original masterpiece, is to be invited to fritter away the vividness of your first impression. And for no country in the world is this ideal guide of mine, telling one what to avoid seeing, more needed than for the Holy Land. If you want to learn all the tombs, holy places, churches, ruins, and mosques you are bound to visit, I must refer you to Murray's Handbook, where you will find, ready cut and dried, not only all that you ought to see in and about the Holy City, but all you ought to feel on the occasion of seeing these sights, and the quotations that are appropriate to each place visited. For my own part, even if space alone were not a sufficient reason against my dwelling on all I have seen, I would sooner, if I could, lose the memory of many sights I have been called upon to gaze at in this treasure-house of world-famed scenes, so as to remember only a few of its chief spectacles, some faint image of which I would gladly reproduce.

In the outskirts of Jerusalem, hard by the Gate of St. Stephen, where the first martyr, as tradition tells us, was

stoned to death, stands the citadel. You mount up long flights of steps, passing through barrack-rooms where Turkish soldiers lie huddled upon the floor; and at last you come out upon a flat roof on which myrtle shrubs grow alongside the parapets, and the Holy City rises round about you. In this clear bright moisture-free air everything looks so close and near that you fancy you could drop a stone down upon the roofs that lie far away beyond rifle-shot, and it is only as your eye becomes accustomed to the distance that you take in the grandeur of the city on which you look. In a semicircle round you is placed Jerusalem, a city standing in a sort of natural amphitheatre, tier upon tier of terraces, row upon row of flat-roofed, dome-surmounted houses. The barrack-like Russian convents, the pseudo-mediæval almshouses, the modern stucco-and-plaster suburb beyond the walls are hidden from view, the horizon is bounded solely by the crest of the hills, along whose summit run the western walls. At your feet is the vast, bare, open space on which once stood the Temple of Solomon—on which now stands the Mosque of Omar. A few Mussulmans sit smoking gravely under the shadow of the trees planted here and there close beneath the sacred shrine; a cripple, whose legs dangle helplessly after him, is crawling on his breast to reach the holy edifice.

But, unless you wear the turban, there is no entrance here for either Christian or Jew, without a special permission. The ground is too sacred, in the eyes of the Moslem, to be desecrated by the foot of the unbeliever. Beyond the plateau of the mosque, you look down upon the parapets of the eastern walls: beyond them, again, is the dark, shadow-covered gorge which men call the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Higher up, just above the gloom of the valley, are the tombs of Absalom and Hezekiah—so, at least, legends say—and the tombs are old enough not to render the legends glaringly improbable; and right in front, above the tombs, towers the Mount of Olives. The eighteen centuries which have come and gone since Christ was wont to ascend the hill at eventide, can have made but little difference in its outward form and shape; the olive-groves must have been as grey and gnarled then as now; the paths, sloping down the hill-side, as steep and rugged; the sky as bright and cloudless; the heat as glaring: and thus, looking on the Mount of Olives, as you do from the Citadel, the whole Bible story comes back to you as, to my feeling, it does nowhere else in the Zion of to-day. Guide-books all tell you that you should first see Jerusalem from the top of the Mount of Olives. I hold that they are wrong. Outside you see too much of the modern suburb—you lose the

aspect of Jerusalem, as seen from its citadel, being a city built in a semicircle on the slope of a hill. You should look upon Zion from within, not from without, and you should leave to conscientious tourists the visit to the olive-covered heights.

So, also, passing without halt or stay by the Pool of Siloam, the Brook Kedron, the Tomb of Rachel, the spo whence Elijah was raised up to heaven in a chariot of fire, I would gladly be carried on straight from the Citadel of Jerusalem to the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. In all southern lands I have known, men seem to have a fancy for building cities on the ridges of a hog's-back-shaped hills. It may be that thus you get the fresh air on either side. Bethlehem is one of those cities, perched astride the neck of a hill; and for miles upon miles away you see its long row of white stone houses glistening in the sunlight among the olives. But one result of this peculiar conformation of length without breadth is, that wherever you enter the city you have to traverse its one long narrow winding street. The houses lie so close together, that you can touch them with your hands on either side as you ride down the alley which, half steep incline, half torrent gully, half flights of steps, is the main street of Bethlehem. The whole of that mile of stones the pilgrim to the shrine

stumbles over amidst a multitude of mendicants. From the moment that you pass the first house of Bethlehem to that in which you get clear of its straggling vineyards, you are surrounded by a motley throng of men, women, and children, barefooted, importunate, ragged, and evil-odoured. Of all beggars, your beggar attached to an ecclesiastical foundation is the most querulous; of all hawkers, your clerical Cheap Jack is invariably the most unscrupulous. Rosaries, crosses, engraved scallop shells, palm sticks, beads, are literally forced into your hands. Every moment your elbow is touched, your coat is seized by some vendor of relics who grudges the attention you are paying to a rival huckster. The cripples who have nothing to sell show their sores and wounds; the women with babies in their arms hold them out piteously; all around you there is a Babel of broken fragments of alms-craving words in all known and unknown tongues; the children crawl between the horses' feet, plucking at your stirrups; and, above all other sounds, there rises a wailing, whining cry of "Baaksheesh! baaksheesh!" dying away, in the mouths of children too young to speak, into a lisp of "Sheesh! sheesh! sheesh!" You would hardly escape from the crowd were it not for your Turkish dragoman, who ever and anon turns round, rides his horse right into the *mêlée*,

and, with blows from his stick, and curses in which the word "Kelb"—*Anglicè*, cur—is repeated again and again, drives your tormentors away. But, though they scatter like a swarm of flies, they cluster round about you the moment the dragoman turns his back, and your escort of suppliants never leaves you till you reach an open place, dismount, and pass in through a low doorway—so low that you have to stoop to enter it—and stand within the cloisters of the Church of the Nativity.

A Turkish firman affixed to the wall hard by the entrance, and transcribed in various languages, lays down the regulations, conditions, and rules under which the different Christian sects may hold worship within the temple; and by the altars there stand armed Turkish guards to see that these regulations are observed, and that each denomination of Christians keeps within its appointed lines. From the cloisters you pass into the church, where Latin, Greek, and Armenian altars are arranged patchwork fashion; and then, by dark flights of steps, half lit with dim oil-lamps, you go down into the crypts, where, according to tradition, the Messiah was born. They show you every spot of which mention is made in the Gospel story. You see the place where the manger stood, the stable where the horses fed; the ground on which the Wise Men of the East knelt when

they brought their presents to the new-born Babe, the site of the cradle, the place where the massacre of the innocents occurred, the cell wherein St. Jerome lived and prayed. And you come forth at length into the light with a confused recollection of winding passages hung with clusters of silver lamps; of grottoes in whose dark recesses are pictures by great masters, gems, jewels, and rare ornaments; of monks, priests, and friars gliding noiselessly with tapers in their hands from cave to cave; of groups of pilgrim peasants kneeling upon the altar-steps of the shrine near the manger, while other groups of rival pilgrims stand a little way off waiting impatiently for their heretic brethren to rise from the ground and give place to the faithful; of Mahometan soldiers tramping to and fro; of low chants echoing through the vaults; of the savour of incense, of the sound of sobs, the clank of swords. And then you come out once more into the open air, and find the goodly company of beggars and relic-mongers waiting for you with their chorus of "Baaksheesh! baaksheesh!"

And this recollection of the shrine of the Nativity, confused though it may be, is, to my mind, more free from the taint of sordid associations than most of the memories you carry away with you from the Holy Land. The manger and the stable may not have stood on the site

where the church stands now; the grottoes, caves, and passages may be only as the other hollows with which the porous soil of this hilly sandstone land is undermined. But thus much is certain—whatever else you may believe or disbelieve—that for some fifteen centuries, ever since the days of the Empress Helena, thousands of pilgrims have come hither year by year to gaze upon the stall where, as they were taught, the Christ was born; to pray at the place where the Magi worshipped; to kneel upon the ground where the Shepherds heard the Angels singing the glad tidings of peace on earth and goodwill to men. Superstition and monkish bigotry may have surrounded most of the Holy Places with a sort of halo of antiquity; but the traditions of the Nativity cannot well be vulgarized even by monks and zealots; and the faith that leads to Bethlehem has in it something purer and holier than the wonder-mongering which draws multitudes to most of the Holy Places.

This refining element is wanting in the third of the three great spectacles, to which, if I could have my way, I would confine the sight-seeing tour of my model tourist. But, though the taint of grovelling superstition lies thick upon the Greek convent of Mar Saaba, the wondrous grandeur of its position makes it, to my mind, one of the

marvels of the Holy Land. A winding zigzag path leads over barren bleak mountains till you reach the mouth of a narrow gorge, on either side of which two half-ruined towers stand as sentries. Then when you pass round these towers, you find yourself on the slope of a deep ravine, the bed of which lies some thousand feet down below you; and on the hill-side whereon you are standing there rises straight from the rock the Convent of the Holy Saaba. The slope is so steep that you wonder how it is that the vast pile of masonry, which forms the building, does not slide down by its own weight into the gorge below; but then, as you look more closely, you see that the towers, terraces, and walls are built into the rock, and indeed in many cases are fashioned out of the rock itself. One above the other these stone ledges rise, covering the bleak hill-side. You are led by passages running along the face of the rock from platform to platform, from each one of which you get finer and finer views of the wild ravine. Right in front of you is the other side of the valley, steep as a wall, and inaccessible except to the foxes, who have their home in the caves on its face. Here, in their holes, the anchorites used to live, and their lives could hardly have been more solitary or useless than those of the monks who dwelt within Mar Saaba now. Their one amusement consists in feeding the foxes

who come down from the caves into the ravine, to pick up the fragments of bread which are thrown from the convent. Their one occupation is to provide shelter for the Russian pilgrims who flock to the shrine of the Saint who ranks among the holiest in the Muscovite hagiology. No woman is allowed ever to visit the sacred shrine; no Bedouin is permitted to cross the threshold; and it is only by special permission that strangers, not belonging to the orthodox Greek faith, can enter the building. The miracles which St. Saaba wrought, the persecutions which he and his disciples underwent, the retribution which he enacted upon the holders of the deadly heresy of the Monophysites, are all recorded in the countless cells with which the rocks are honeycombed. In the outer court the pilgrims hold a little mart, where they sell crosses, palm-rods, and salad spoons, all made of sacred wood, all invested with the sanctity of being sold and chaffered for upon Holy ground.

When you have looked upon Mar Saaba, I would carry you straight away into the wilderness, where you see the real glory of the Holy Land. But of the stock sights, the Holy Places, you should see none besides the view of Zion from the citadel, the Church of the Nativity, and the convent of Mar Saaba. When you have seen these, if you are wise, you will rest content.

THE CAVE OF ADULLAM.

KHOREITOUN.

OF all the statesmen, candidates for parliamentary honours, town councillors, and mob orators who have made hits during the last three years by allusions to the Cave of Adullam, I wonder how many have any distinct notion as to where the cave is situated. Never surely was there a joke worn more threadbare than that about Adullam and its inmates; and I confess I felt a sort of qualm when a fellow-traveller, for whom the cave had something of a personal interest, proposed that we should make a journey from Jerusalem to the valley of Khoreitoun, wherein lie the hiding-places in which David found refuge from the wrath of Saul. It was not a very easy matter to find the spot we wished to visit. It lies out of the beaten tourist-track. Our dragoman himself, who spends his life conveying travellers about the Holy Land, had never visited it; and all we could learn was that it lay somewhere behind the great Frank mountain, the hill fortress

where, according to tradition, the Crusaders held their own in Palestine for forty years after the Saracens had driven them out of Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Acre. However, we secured a guide at Bethlehem, who did not profess to know the way himself, but who had known somebody who did; and, under his guidance, we set forth on our journey through the wilderness.

Leaving Bethlehem behind us, we skirted a few straggling vineyards, passed a patch or two of olive grounds, halted at a roadside chapel where the Virgin Mary is said to have hid herself with the infant Jesus during the Massacre of the Innocents, and we then rode on into a scene of such utter desolation as I never till then had looked upon. In the desert you must wander on for miles beyond the brink of the sand ocean before you lose sight of the habitations of men, and the traces of cultivation and human life. But here, in the Holy Land, you step into complete solitude when you have once set foot in the wilderness. Fancy an endless range of steep ridges, enclosing narrow valleys; cover the whole soil with stones, rocks, and pebbles; pluck out every vestige of vegetation, save a few brushwood shrubs and grey patches of moss and lichen; strew over the whole surface a coating of sand, drain away every drop of water, dry up the country-side

with the glaring, burning heat of an Eastern sun, and you will have some faint semblance of this wilderness of the Holy Land. Down in the valleys you see stones and sand; the watercourses are blocked up with boulders; the paths are goat tracks winding between rows of stones; the ground on which you tread is a mere mass of flints, powdered loosely over with gritty soil. When you reach the crest of one of the hills, you look upon valley after valley stretching away before you, each clad with its garment of stones. I suppose geologists would be able to determine how the strata run, to show you that the valleys all turn down with some sort of sequence towards the great trough of the river Jordan. But, to the ordinary spectator, the hills and valleys seemed tossed and turned and twisted at every incline and slope and angle, without system or law of any kind. One hill is so like another, so uniform with the rest in its black barrenness; one valley is so nearly the counterpart of another, with its dry watercourse and its layers of stones, that it is hard to guide your way, even if you know the country, by any kind of landmarks.

Within five miles, as the crow flies, of Bethlehem, our guide, who was born in the district, and had shot over it all his life, confessed that he had lost his way, and had no

notion whereabouts we were; and, to make the confusion worse, the mountain tops, of which from time to time you catch a glimpse, look so near at hand in this bright clear air that you cannot realize the fact that, between them and the next ridge, over whose brow you see them rising, there lies a long series of hills and valleys. Still, it may be said that you have always the resource of asking your way. The only objection to the utility of this advice is that you have nobody of whom to ask it. Every now and then, at rare intervals, you may chance to come across a Bedouin camp, hidden out of sight in some nook or hollow; but for these wandering tribes there is no fixed residence, they have no houses of call, no trysting-places even, like those of the European gipsies; and you may wander for days in the wilderness without meeting one living soul. I suppose the wilderness might be cultivated with care: the scanty patches where the Bedouins plant their barley crops seem to be fruitful enough; and every one acquainted with the State of Massachusetts must be aware that a soil made up of loose stones is not incapable of being tilled. But the labour of changing these stony hill-sides into arable land would never be remunerative unless Judea had a population far larger than she has ever had within historic times; and what the wilderness is now, that it

assuredly was in the days of Christ, of David, and of Abraham.

Thus it comes to pass that the wilderness is fuller of recollections, more suggestive of memories, than the towns and buildings which are directly associated with the incidents of Holy Writ. Ruins there are none, except the broken walls of a few khans which were erected for travellers in the palmy days of the great Saladin's rule; civilization has set no abiding mark upon this mountain desert; and such culture as there is has made no progress for scores of centuries. The camel's-hair garment which John the Baptist wore is the same which the Bedouins of the wilderness wear now. The Arabs who wander up and down these valleys are the twin-brethren in mind, and look, and manners of the men who flocked to David's standard in the Cave of Adullam. So, musing on these things, we went on and on, groping our way over heaps of stone, slabs of rock, and shoals of shingles. How our horses stumbled up the hill-side was a mystery surpassed only by the marvel how they stumbled down. Over crags, by the side of steep precipices, down slopes of loose pebbles, which rolled away far into the valley beneath their hoofs, our sure-footed, rugged, ill-kempt Arab steeds trudged on, till after a short

time we lost the sense of there being any possibility of danger from their taking a false step, and allowed them to pick their own way without care or thought of ours. It was pleasant so to ride; but the very absence of any necessity to pay heed to our horse's steps added to the sense of almost depressing solitude conveyed by the sight of that lone expanse of barren desert. How lonely it was may be judged by the fact that, when we came to an open space where we saw far away on the horizon the tomb of a Moslem saint, and where, in consequence, every Mussulman who passed the spot had added a stone to the little piles laid carefully upon each roadside slab, in honour of the shrine, there was a feeling of positive relief in the evidence that human beings were in the habit of treading the track over which our path led us.

Some three hours' ride in the wilderness brought us to the Frank mountain. Unlike any other hill far or near, it rises volcano-like from out of the desert, and seems to belong to a different formation from the narrow shelving mountain ridges with which it is girt about on every side. A path, so steep that even our Arab horses slipped and stumbled as they panted up it, wound round the sides of the sugar-loaf-shaped cone which crowns

the hill; and when at length we reached the summit, there opened out before us one of those views which, once seen, leave an indelible impress upon the memory. The expanse of the wilderness lay stretched at our feet. From the height on which we stood, the sandy, sunburnt hills and valleys looked like the ridges and furrows in a mammoth field ploughed by Titans. There was not a cloud in the sky, but the ups and downs of the desert cast their dark shadows upon each other till the country-side bore a resemblance to a huge chessboard, crossed with patches of glaring light and gloomy shade. The domes of Jerusalem and the olive-trees of the Holy Mount stood out distinct and sharp upon the summit of the rocky mountain range which closed the horizon to the north. To the south, the Dead Sea, blue as cobalt, without a ripple upon its waters, unfolded its great length below us; and upon the east we could see the silver streak which marked the course of the Jordan, winding, like a tangled skein, through the long flat plain that runs to the Sea of Sodom from the Lake of Galilee. Eastwards, beyond the river and the sea, the purple range of the Moab mountains rose straight up into the sky, a monster wall of rock. And then, gazing around and about, the unbroken solitude, the desert barrenness of this

wilderness land became clearer to us than it had been before. Wherever we turned there was no sign of smoke; upon the long reaches of dark blue water not a boat or sail was to be seen; save the towns of Jerusalem and of Bethlehem, there was not upon the mountain heights a city, village, hamlet, or house to be espied. Only in the valley of the Jordan could trees be traced; elsewhere, east, west, north, and south, there was not a belt of verdure, not a clump of trees, scarcely a stray patch of brushwood. On the slopes of the Frank mountain a Bedouin encampment lay nestled, and the low black camel-hair tents, even when seen at our feet, were so hard to distinguish amidst the dark grey stones that it might well be that many of the little specks of black you could see dotting the fields of stone were tents also. To the untrained eye, however, the stones held undisputed possession of that dreary waste. A few camels could be seen browsing on the arid hill-sides, an eagle hovered in mid-air over the plain below; but, except the hum of our own voices, there was no sound of living thing—all was still, desolate, silent.

When we had looked our fill upon this panorama of the wilderness, seen from the mountain whence the Crusaders gazed for the last time upon the Holy Land, we clambered

down the steep path again, and passed over stony hills and yet stonier valleys, till at last we found ourselves at the entrance of a deep gorge, a sort of fissure slit through the mountains, leading downwards towards the plain. Here, as our luck chanced, we came upon a Bedouin camp hidden under a ledge of rock, and learnt that we had hit upon the right road, and were at Khoreitoun, the head of the ravine in which the Caves of Adullam lie buried. So broken is the face of this strange, upheaved, indented wilderness, that within five minutes of the time when we turned out of the rolling stone-covered moorland, we were riding along the side of a mountain-gorge whose dry bed lay a thousand feet or more beneath the ledge along which our horses scrambled fearlessly. On the bare slopes far ahead we could see little blots of black, which the Bedouins who had crowded round us told us were the mouths of the Adullam caves. And ere long we reached a spot where the ledge became too narrow even for mountain horses to walk along it; and so, escorted by our Arab guides, we crawled onwards on foot, expecting at every turn that the ledge would end, and our further progress be barred by the precipice. Great blocks of rock had been piled—whether by nature or by man, I could not tell—right in the centre of the

path, and over them we had to be lifted up by the Bedouins. Danger there was none, so long as you were moderately sure of foot and strong of head; but one push from an unfriendly hand, and you might have been sent rolling into the abyss below. Troops armed with needle-guns and supported by modern artillery would find it, I think, impossible to force their way up to the Caves of Adullam if the stronghold were defended by Arabs with their flint matchlocks; and, in the days before powder was invented, the hiding-place must have been absolutely impregnable. Even Marshal Bugeaud's famous Algerian recipe for smoking your Arab to death by lighting a fire at the mouth of his cave would not be applicable here, from the sheer impossibility of bringing firewood up to the entrance of his warren.

Ere long our path ended in front of a mass of rock lying athwart the ledge. Climbing up it by steps cut in the side, we found ourselves opposite a hole in the face of the hill. A spring and a jump across the cleft which lay between the cliff and the rock, and we stood at last within the famous cave where every one "that was in distress, or in debt, or discontented," gathered himself to David. Of the traditions associating certain spots with the deeds of the Bible worthies, there are

few more clear and definite than that which connects the caves of the Valley of Khoreitoun with those of Adullam. Assuredly this mountain-side cavern might serve to-day as the refuge and stronghold of a band of outlaws, even as it served some three thousand years ago. By narrow passages, so low that you had to stoop to the ground to enter them, you passed from one grotto to another, lofty, wide, and airy enough for hundreds of men to dwell therein in safety. According to the story of the Arabs, this labyrinth of caves stretches for an unknown distance below the mountain. It may be so; for, since the days of David, nobody is likely to have explored its recesses. The only thing that seems inconsistent with the place's having been the refuge of free-booters is the apparent absence of water. It was from the Cave of Adullam, however, that the three chief among the mighty men went forth to fetch the water from the well of Bethlehem for which David longed; and this incident seems to confirm the notion that the cave, even then, had no running water within its hollows. The distance of Adullam from Bethlehem has led some commentators to assign the name of Adullam to certain smaller caves nearer the city. I can only say, in corroboration of the Khoreitoun theory, that, journeying from Beth-

lehem, we had to carry our water pitchers with us, and that, for the whole distance, we passed neither brook, well, nor cistern, from the time of our leaving Bethlehem.

Our guides were timid about going far into the depths of Adullam, for fear of losing their way in its maze of grottoes; and so, when we had visited some half-dozen of its chambers, we retraced our steps, came back into the light, and bade farewell to the cave, whose name was so strangely familiar to us, whose dark, grim, stern reality contrasted so strongly with the modern associations with which we had learnt to connect it.

TENT LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

JERICHO.

ON board a Cunard steamer from Liverpool to New York, I made, some years ago, the acquaintance of a traveller in the dry-goods line, who sang one song, and one song only. Musical talent of the vocal kind was not plentiful on board the good ship *Africa* on the voyage, and my fellow-passenger used to be called upon, night after night, as we smoked our cigars in the fiddle, for his one song, which was encored as a matter of course. A very little goes a long way on board ship, and so from among a mass of much worthier recollections, which have passed clean out of my mind, I have always retained the memory of the dry-goods man's melody. The burden ran after this fashion:

> "We are pilgrims in the wilderness
> For a few, few days."

It was not a hymn, as you may suppose from the chorus. Nor, though it verged possibly upon undue familiarity

with Biblical subjects, was it of a profane character. Such as it was, the concluding stave used to be sung by all who could carol out a note, and I can hear now, as I recall it, the roar of voices amidst the howling of the wind announcing that for a few, few days we, too, were pilgrims in the wilderness.

For the last week the chorus has been mentally ringing in my ears, as being the exact description of my mode of life. It has been my lot to be a pilgrim in the wilderness, and, happily, my pilgrimage has been of a few days' duration only. Given fine weather, pleasant companions, good horses, and tolerable provender, and I know no more enjoyable way of passing a short time than camping out in the desert. But, even with all these adjuncts, the encampment should not—for pleasure—be a lengthy one. Of all the people known to me, who have taken long journeys under canvas, I never knew one who was not glad once more to get a roof over his head and a carpet under his feet; and, with all the grandeur of the desert, its endless monotony must grow wearisome after the first three days. But, for a tour under canvas, the Holy Land seems to me an ideal country. The scenery is wild, lonely, and desolate enough to have suited Vathek himself. The most exacting of hermits may be satisfied with camping

out in a solitude where you hear the jackals howling round you; where you have no chance of meeting a human being, except a stray Bedouin; and where, as far as the eye can reach, there is not a sign of human habitation, or a trace of the haunts of man. All this, no doubt, you may find in the desert as well as in the wilderness; but in the latter you have the marked advantage that every stage you take, every place at which you make halt, every hill you traverse is connected with some memory which cannot fail to interest the most indifferent of travellers. For all men to whom the Bible stories have been familiar from childhood, the Holy Land is a sort of Via Sacra, filled with monuments of the past; and it is impossible to travel through any part of Palestine without coming at every turn on some spot which, rightly or wrongly, is said to be the scene—and which, in any case, may very possibly have been the scene—of incidents whose details come back fresh to your mind at the very mention of the localities wherein they were enacted.

But it is of our life in tents, not of the scenes through which we passed, that I would write. We were a party of four; and for the conveyance of ourselves, our dragoman, cook, guides, and luggage, we had six horses, two donkeys, and ten mules. Besides our regular and acknowledged

cavalcade, we had a knot of unauthorized hangers-on—odd men with no apparent service to render, who did nothing, and seemed not to be going anywhere, and whose "reason of being," as the French would say, consisted in the fact that they were taken as friends to make company. Except along the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, there is no possibility of driving in anything supported on wheels. Some notion, indeed, of the backward state of the country under Turkish rule may be gathered from the circumstance, that throughout the whole time I have been in the Holy Land, I have never seen carriage, cart, or conveyance of any kind. So, if you want to travel anywhere in Palestine, you must ride on camels or mules, on donkeys or horses. Looking at the roads—or rather the tracks that do service for roads—you would fancy beforehand that no horse could keep his legs over the ground. But even a mule is hardly so sure of foot as the Arab horses of the mountains. Their paces are execrable; their walk is slow and halting; their trot is of the joggiest kind; their gallop, though fast, is so rough that every bone in your body rattles with the jolting; but their steadiness of step redeems all minor sins. And in justice to them, it must fairly be admitted that half their faults are probably due to the villanous character of their mouth

gear. The bits which they are forced to wear are so sharp that the slightest pull cuts and mauls their mouths, and in consequence, at a touch of the bridle, their head goes up into the air. This is what the Arab likes. With a sharp twist at the bit he can send his horse curvetting round and round upon his hind legs, performing what, by a skating metaphor, I may call the outside edge of equitation. So, too, he can dart off at full gallop, and, by a sudden wrench, bring his horse to a full stop upon the haunches. No argument can induce an Arab to believe that an English snaffle-bit is more convenient for the rider; and as for the consideration of its being more merciful to the horse, he would laugh at the idea, even if you could get him—which I doubt—to realize its meaning. Unless you bring English bridles with you—a thing I should advise every traveller to do who means to spend any time in the East—you must perforce ride your horse with an Arab bit; and if so, with your English fashion of using the reins, you will make your horse uncomfortable, and be, in consequence, uncomfortable yourself.

If you are upon a journey of any length, you have to start betimes. As soon as the first streaks of light are seen in the east, you are up and dressing: and before the

sun rises you are, or ought to be, in your saddle. But the start commonly occupies a good deal of time. The stirrups, bridles, and girths are all either of rope, or patched and tinkered up with rope; and somebody's harness is sure to be out of order; somebody's stirrups require shortening; somebody else's saddle turns round as he attempts to mount; and everybody has got everybody else's bridle. "Ramshackle" is the one word which applies to all Arab harness; and the faculty of patching odds and ends together, so as to make a broken, rotten rope serve in lieu of a stout leather strap, is not possessed, so far as I could see, by the Children of the Desert. Indeed, if it had not been for the negro stable-boy who rode on the mule which carried the provisions, and who was always either grinning or singing, and generally doing both at the same time, I don't know how we should ever have got our tackle kept in working order. But, if you are of a contemplative turn of mind, if you have just had your morning cup of strong black coffee, and are just smoking your first morning pipe of Syrian tobacco, you can afford to wait patiently enough during all the delays which invariably precede the starting of the cavalcade.

At last, however, you get under way. The heat in this mountain land is not great during winter time till towards

noon, even when the sun is shining; and, if you are content to let your horse select his own paces, and to do your four miles an hour quietly, you can hardly pass time more pleasantly than in riding over Judea in the early morning hours. The air is so fresh, crisp, and soft, that merely to breathe it is a luxury; the ever-changing panorama of hill and dale, rock and crag, cliff and moorland and heather, is a sight on which you can gaze long without wearying. The shadows, sailing over the mountain's sides, the countless hues of colour with which hill and plain are clad in turn, the glory of the deep blue sky, are things, I think, to be realized in their fulness only as you ride on by yourself, ahead of your companions, and alone for the time in the wilderness. There is not, indeed, much of incident in the vicissitudes of your ride. A covey of red-legged partridges, whirring up into the air under your horse's feet; an eagle soaring in the heavens above you; a jackal gnawing the white bones of a dead camel whose skeleton lies close beside your path; a Bedouin camp, or a stray patch of green by the side of a mountain spring—such are well-nigh the only incidents you can recall of your tramp through the wilderness; but the very absence of adventure increases the sense of repose, which must come to every man whose life is a

busy one, as he rides slowly onward over that fair lone country-side.

About mid-day a halt is called; out of the huge saddle-bags of the dragoman there are produced fowls, hard-boiled eggs, sardines, sausages, bottles of dark red wine, carpets, knives and forks; and, squatting on the ground, you eat everything that is indigestible, in the confidence that in this fresh mountain air you can digest anything—a confidence which, I am bound to say, is seldom misplaced. Then, after more pipes and lazy dozing in the cool shade, you mount your horse again and ride onwards. The afternoon stage is never quite so pleasant as the before lunch one. The day is hot, you are heated, your legs are stiff, and your horse is not so fresh. Still you have the knowledge that the afternoon cannot last long in this season of the year; and that with sunset you must halt perforce: late riding along these mountain tracks is a thing not to be tried after dark. The shadows your horse throws upon the stones by your pathside become longer and longer; the air grows cooler; the distant hills are covered with that rich purple tint which they never wear except in the last gleams of sunlight at eventide; the sun sinks behind the Western wilderness in a very blaze of fire. Then the dusk comes on apace; the hills grow grey and

cold in colour; the stones along the road become scarce distinguishable from the sand; and then, just as you think that the night will overtake you before you reach your resting-place, you turn a corner, and see your tent encampment pitched before you.

The tents—I grieve for the sake of romance to own it—have nothing of the Bedouin look about them, and are, in fact, the fac-similes of the marquees you see at an English archery meeting. Inside, the ground is patched over with drugget. Little French iron bedsteads are placed upon the sand, and you have a table, camp-stools to sit upon, washing apparatus—everything, in fact, you find in an ordinary hotel. Lemonade is brought round to you, as soon as you arrive, to take the dust out of your mouth. An hour is allowed for sleep, and then dinner is placed upon the table. I do not say that you should travel in the wilderness for the sake of the tent *cuisine;* but I can say that in three hotels out of four you do not get as good a dinner as you get cooked here under canvas. For your *ménu,* you have soup, fish when you are near running water, two courses of meat, sweets, fruit, and coffee. Wine the dragoman does not provide for you; but, with that exception, he caters for you in every way; and, unless you make purchases on your own account, you have no

need to put your hand in your pocket the whole of the time you are under his care. Everything, I should add, so far as your comfort is concerned, depends upon the honesty and liberality of your dragoman; and, if any of my readers should ever come to Jaffa, they cannot do better than engage the services of Suleiman Ali, the son of the late harbour-master of that port.

When dinner is over, an adjournment is voted to the open air, in order that the tent may be cleared. Narghilés and chibouks are called into requisition; and it is pleasant to sit outside, watching the dusky-faced Arab servants as they squat round their fire in the most picturesque of dresses and attitudes. Our journey chanced to take place during the fast of the Ramadan; and from sunrise to sunset no one of our attendants—except our dragoman, who deemed himself to be absolved from observing the fast by the fact of his being on a journey—ever broke bread or drank water, or took a whiff of tobacco. After the abstinence of the day the evening was for them a carnival season; and till late in the night —late, at least, that is, for the wilderness—you could hear them chattering, laughing, and singing about the camp-fires. For your own part, when the after-dinner pipe has been smoked, you come back to the shelter of your tent.

Then there are more cigars, perhaps cards, and possibly something hot, not suited for a temperance gathering; and then, stiff and wholesomely tired, you go to bed, and sleep so soundly that even the yelling of the jackals scarcely disturbs you, and you think you have only just fallen off to sleep when, waked by the shaking of the closed tent curtains, you look out and see the grey morning light stealing in, and know that it is time to be up and in the saddle. So one day follows another; and, for a few days, I know of no pleasanter mode of life than to be a pilgrim in the wilderness.

THE LAST VIEW OF PALESTINE.

JAFFA.

A SHOPMAN in Jerusalem—a *protégé*, like most well-to-do traders in that woe-begone city, of the Society for the Conversion of the Chosen People—complained to me the other day, that great injury had been done to the business prospects of the place by the rash statement of some newspaper writer, that the heat was too great in Jerusalem for people to leave the shelter of their roofs. I promised to contradict the statement by a counter-assertion, that the cold was too severe in Jerusalem for people to leave the shelter of their walls; and, whatever may have been the case with my predecessor, my statement would have been literally true, so far as the later portion of my sojourn in the Holy City was concerned. Leaving the valley of the Jordan basking in glorious summer heat, we come back to find Jerusalem shivering in mid-winter. I have been in many chilly, many wet, and many dreary places, but for

chilliness, damp, and dreariness, commend me to Zion during a wintry storm. How the wind howled and whistled; how pitilessly the rain, hail, and sleet beat down upon the ground; how the narrow streets were turned into water-gullies, coursed down by angry muddy torrents; how slippery the stones became; how the windows kept bursting open; how the stoves, over which we cowered, refused to draw; how the ill-clad Arabs crouched and shivered about the streets; how teeth chattered, children whined, and beggars huddled helplessly together at street corners; and how from all quarters of the city there rose up a thousand evil scents and fœtid odours—these are things to be remembered as a caution by any one who thinks of visiting Judea during the rainy season.

In such weather the sordidness of Jerusalem, the tawdry frippery of its relic marts, the squalor of its pilgrim population, the shabbiness of its shrines, the smallness of its size, the meanness of its buildings, impress the mind more strongly than at other seasons, and heighten that sense of incongruity between the historic grandeur of the past and the sordid reality of the present, which seems to me to override any other sensation with respect to the Holy City. Nevertheless, those cheerless winter days, during which we tried in vain to delude ourselves into an impression that

we were warm as we hung over the stove, were interspersed with fitful gleams of wintry sunshine. It was in one of these lulls between two storms that I made my way to the only great sight of Jerusalem I had not yet visited—the place where once stood the Temple of Solomon in all its glory, whereon now stands the Mosque of Omar. A special firman had to be obtained to permit of our entrance, and a fee of a napoleon given to the keepers of the Holy Shrine, in consideration of which they allowed us to visit the mosque under the protection of a Turkish soldier. I question, however, whether either the firman or the escort was really needed. Baakscheesh, whether in gold or silver, is the one talisman required to open the doors of this or any other sacred edifice in all parts of Turkey visited habitually by foreign tourists. The Turk has long come to the conclusion that the Western Frank is too many for him; and it must be some very gross outrage indeed, on the part of Englishmen or Frenchmen, which could induce the Mussulman to lift up his hand against them in Palestine. No doubt this wholesome terror is not inspired by the native Greek or Christian Rayah, and it would go hard with any of the local Christian or Jewish populace, if they were found trespassing, alone and unprotected, upon the holy ground whence Mahomet ascended up to heaven.

However, I provided myself with both firman and escort, and though I visited the mosque during the height of the Ramadan, when the fanaticism of Islam is supposed to be at its highest, the only annoyance I received was from the crowd of Turkish beggars and boys, who followed me from place to place with endless cries for baakscheesh. I was shown over the whole edifice; I visited the cellars, vaults, foundations, where you are told you see—and where very likely you do see—traces, not only of the Temple from which Christ drove forth the hucksters, but of the still older Temple which Solomon built as an abode for the Ark of God. But not being an antiquarian or an archæologist, I own that one block of stone buried underground always seems to me very like another, and you get as much idea what the Temple was like, from seeing one slab which may possibly have belonged to it, as you would of a piece of tapestry, from gazing at a single thread drawn from the back of the canvas. When you have seen the Mosque of Omar, you know that the Temple, if it stood on the same spot, must have occupied a very grand and commanding position. But then you learned that fact, the first time you ever looked from without upon the noble plateau which overhangs the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Still, for all that, the visit to the Mosque of Omar is one of the brightest

recollections of my sojourn in Jerusalem. No thinking man, however deep and sincere his faith may be, can, I hold, see much of the Holy Places without a feeling of profound depression, amounting almost to a sense of degradation. The tawdry mummery of the altars and shrines, the servile fetish worship of the pilgrims, the sordid squabbles of the rival creeds, the mode in which capital is made of every memory, every incident in Christ's life and death traded upon—all these things cannot but disgust any man, Catholic, Greek, Protestant, or what you like, who sees in religion anything deeper and nobler than a cunning contrivance for speculating on the weaknesses, vanities, and superstitions of mankind: and, feeling this, fresh from the degradation of the shrines where they have almost vulgarized the simple beauty of the simplest and most beautiful of all stories which have ever yet been told to man, it is a positive relief to enter the Mosque of Omar.

When you have taken off your shoes, and passed under the shadow of the lofty dome, you seem to have left behind you the dirt, frippery, and grovelling meanness of the Holy Places, and to breathe a purer atmosphere. All here is plain, simple, and yet withal stately. The pillars are of hewn marble, the roof inlaid with rich mosaics, the walls

covered with rare arabesques. But there are neither altars, pictures, nor images; neither priests, popes, nor friars; neither incense, music, nor tapers. Right in the centre of the pavement there rises a rough block of stone. It is here, as legends say, that Mahomet last touched the earth as he mounted heavenwards; and so, to the Moslem as to the Jew, this site of the Temple is holy ground. Service there is none, but the mosque is filled with men, some reading out to others, some to themselves; some praying aloud, bowing towards Mecca as they pray; some murmuring with bated breath, kneeling as they murmur; one and all worshipping God after their own fashion. Very little knowledge of the East is required to know that Islam has its fair share of superstitions, empty ceremonials, and vulgar relic-worship. The very railing round the sacred rock, festooned with little wisps and shreds of cloth, looked as if children had been playing at tying bows about the balustrade. These odds and ends, however, of cloth, are in reality a sort of visiting cards—if I may use the word—left upon the Prophet by devout worshippers. Every pilgrim takes some little shred from his dress when he quits the mosque, and binds it to the railings, in order that, at the Day of Judgment, Mahomet may remember his name among those who did honour to the Prophet's

memory by a visit to Jerusalem. Hard by, they show you the sacred pillars, by passing between which you throw away the burden of your sins, and a black marble slab, which if you can find and kiss blindfold, your entry into Paradise is assured and certain; and so I doubt not, that the more you look below the surface, the more you would find that the worship of Islam fell short of its ideal simplicity. But the outer garb is still simple and pure; and judging of things, as men always have judged, and always will judge, by their external aspect, I do not wonder if the Mussulman cannot be induced to believe that the faith confessed in the Mosque of Omar is not higher than the one degraded and debased by tinsel and pageantry in the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity. I ask myself often how much longer will the Crescent rise above the Cross in the Holy City. The Turks have closed up the Golden Gate with stones, because the tradition runs that through that gate the Christians are to enter when they recapture Jerusalem, with Christ marching at their head. I am afraid that the precaution is about as valuable as the protection of the treaties and guarantees on which the Sultan relies to avert the accomplishment of the "manifest destiny."

The Mosque of Omar is well-nigh the best of my recol-

lections of Jerusalem. The rain came on more piteously than ever after the brief interval which enabled me to visit the site of the Temple. I got wet in trying to see the Tombs of the Kings, and if I could have seen them in glowing sunshine, I should scarce have thought the excursion repaid by the curiosity of the sight. The caves, hewn in the rock, are curious only from their associations; and as the one thing you can say with any approach to certainty about these tombs is, that the kings of Israel and Judah were *not* buried there, it is not very easy for an unimaginative man to know what particular associations he ought to reflect upon, when he stands within the mouldy caverns. The curious feature, to my mind, about these tombs is the evidence they afford as to the vast antiquarian discoveries which might be made, if the Turkish Government, like that of the Khediveh, would use its influence to promote and encourage researches. On the contrary, great difficulties are thrown by the authorities in the way even of private exploration, or perhaps, I should more truly say, by the fanatical prejudices of the native population—Moslem, Christian, and Jewish alike—prejudices which the authorities are either unable or unwilling to disregard. Some day or other the Governor of Syria—whether he be called Pacha or Viceroy, Préfet or Lord High Commis-

sioner—will not owe allegiance to the Porte, and then antiquarian research will be able to teach the world something of the history of this marvellous land, of which it may be said, as has been said of Sicily, that it is a palimpsest, whereon are inscribed, one below the other, the records of many nations, races, and empires.

Of the fugitive impressions derived from such a tour as I have just taken through the Holy Land, one of the most marked is, that the Jewish element in the population is of far less importance than I had imagined beforehand. The whole country is so thinly populated, that it is not easy to say what race is the predominant one; but it is clear the Jewish is not. Riding, as I have now done, for days about the country, I have never seen a Jew in the villages, in the fields, or on the mountain roads; and as all the Palestine Jews adhere to their peculiar costume—the long coat, the flat cap, and the corkscrew ringlets—it is impossible to overlook them, even in a crowd. So far as I could make out, they are to be found almost exclusively in Tripoli, Beyrout, Damascus, Jaffa, and Jerusalem. In the Holy City itself they number about six thousand, but the greater proportion of this Jewish colony is composed of pilgrims from Poland and Germany, who are supported by the charity of their wealthy co-religionists abroad, and

even with this help they are as a body miserably poor and wretched. Looking at the question apart from any collateral considerations, theological or otherwise, I should say that the future of Palestine lay with the Syrian Christians. They are not an attractive race, either in look or character, and my personal experience, like that of all other travellers, would lead me to give the preference to the Mussulman Arabs. But I have long observed, with races as with individuals, that it is not the pleasantest mannered people who get on best in this world; and what little energy, enterprise, or progress there is to be found in Palestine, is with the Rayah, not with the Mussulman.

There has lately come out to the Holy Land a German colony, under the special protection of the Prussian Government. Whether they will succeed better than the American settlers who followed the prophet Adams, remains to be seen. They cannot fail, however, to add a few more heads to the poor tally of Protestants who dwell within the diocese of the Anglo-Prussian Bishop of Jerusalem. Dr. Arnold and Baron Bunsen were of the belief, that the foundation of a Protestant see at Jerusalem was one of the most important events in the nineteenth century. It may be so; and I have no doubt that both

Bishop Alexander and Bishop Gobat, the late and present occupants of the see of Judea, have done their duty. But, considering the amount of spiritual destitution at home, it seems somewhat absurd that the one hundred and odd Protestants in Jerusalem should monopolize the cares of a Bishop at twelve hundred a year, a clergyman with, I believe, a salary of three hundred, and two missionaries with a stipend of some hundred and fifty a-piece.

It was raining when we rode slowly out of Jerusalem; raining when we rode, tired and weary, into Ramleh; raining when we galloped into Jaffa. As we turned to catch a last glimpse of the Holy City from the hill of the tomb of the prophet Samuel, we could scarcely trace the minarets of the Mosque of Omar rising above the mist which hung around the town. If it were possible, I would blot out from my memories of the Holy Land well-nigh all that I have seen of Jerusalem itself—would remember only the glorious view from the Frank mountain. As I looked down upon the Dead Sea, the Jordan Valley, the hills of Moab, the vast expanse of the wilderness, I knew that, as it looked now, so it looked in the days of the kings, prophets, evangelists, apostles, and holy men, whose teaching still lives and works wherever upon this

wide world of ours men have received the faith of the Nazarene; and, knowing this, I felt that there, not amidst the mouldering ruins of the Holy City, should be of right the close of a pilgrimage to Palestine.

END OF VOL. I.

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THE MORNING LAND.

THE MORNING LAND.

BY

EDWARD DICEY,

LATE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" IN THE EAST.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE MORNING LAND.

THE PORT OF EGYPT.

ALEXANDRIA, *October* 25.

COMING to Alexandria fresh from Turkish territory, I seem to have passed from stagnation and decay to active life and progress. In estimating the worth of this impression, I must fairly make allowance for the condition of mind and body in which I landed at Alexandria. Almost any place in the world—say Hull itself—would have looked bright and cheerful after you had been confined for days in a sort of floating Black Hole of Calcutta. In the second place, I must fairly own that the Alexandria I have seen as yet has not much more pretension to be called an Eastern city than Boulogne-sur-Mer has to be considered a French watering-place. The Alexandria of which I write is a thriving Franco-Italian town, planted as an exotic on the shores of Africa. Still, on the other hand, Pera was often pointed out to me as a proof of

Ottoman progress. Alexandria is surely as much an Egyptian as Pera is a Turkish city; and, after all, it is something to say for a country that foreign residents have succeeded in establishing comfortable quarters within it. If the "genius loci," which in the East I take to be the spirit of dirt and indolence, had been as powerful on the Nile as on the Bosphorus, Alexandria could never have been called into being.

Could the sandbanks which line the coast of Belgium be baked for a score of years under such a sun as the Flamands can but faintly conceive in the hottest of the dog days, the shore between Ostend and Blankenberghe would bear a close resemblance to that of Egypt as seen from the Mediterranean. Out at sea you behold the masts and pillars of Alexandria rising out of the water long before you recognise the low strip of sand on which the city stands. The port as we entered it was, perhaps, exceptionally crowded. The *Aigle* was lying there at anchor, with the Imperial standard flying at her stern—the Empress having made a very quick passage, and reached Alexandria on Friday morning. There were the Italian ironclads, which have come here as an escort for Prince Amadeus. An English man-of-war is also stationed here; and the Egyptian ironclads, which

the Sultan grudges so sorely, are moored for the present under the shelter of the Alexandrian forts. Still, if all the frigates, ironclads, and gunboats had been removed, the Port of Egypt would have been crowded with vessels. There was nothing like the variety and picturesqueness of shipping to be seen in the Bosphorus; but even an inexperienced eye could see that the average burden and tonnage of the ships were of far greater amount. About the European quarter there is little that need be said, except that it is prosperous and handsome, and comparatively clean. The houses are built of stone or brick, instead of wood; the streets are broad and fairly well paved; the lamps are lit with gas; the shop windows are decked out with European goods arrayed after the Western fashion. Excellent open carriages ply at every corner for hire; and the donkeys of which old books of Eastern travel have told us so much are no longer the fashionable means of locomotion in Alexandria. The very nomenclature of the streets is cosmopolitan. I noticed close together, in one quarter, the Rue Bonaparte, Rue Bismarck, and Rue Napier. Napoleons and rupees are respectively the staples of the gold and silver currency. There are English hotels, French *cafés*, German beerhouses, and Italian *ristoratores;*

and, as usual in towns of this sort, the only people who seem not to be at home are the natives.

Between the city and the suburb of Rammle, which bears about the same relation to Alexandria as New Brighton does to Liverpool, there runs the most nondescript line of railroad it has ever been my fate to traverse. Some of its trains are worked by steam-power, others by horse-power; and the trains in which you are dragged by horses cost double the price of the others. The porters and ticket takers are all Italian; the inscriptions over the offices and waiting-rooms, the directions to travellers, the bye-laws of the Rammle Railway Company, are all written in Italian: but the rolling stock is English; the carriages are of genuine British make, with "first class" and "second class" painted on their doors, and belonged once, as you may see by looking at the iron plates between the buffers, to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railroad. After true English fashion, carriages constructed for the chill, bleak moorland of England are selected for this hot, clear climate, where air and space are the two things most desirable. But the force of circumstances has compelled the management to submit so far to the exigencies of the case, as to add to their good old-fashioned, close,

stuffy carriages, a number of long, windowless, American cars in which you can breathe at any rate. Surely no line, not even in the United States, ever had an odder collection of names for its roadside stations: Rammle is genuine Egyptian, Bulkley is as unequivocally British, Schegger is emphatically Teutonic, Bella Vista is Italian; but to what nation in the world can you ascribe the name "Sidney o Schurtz," which belongs to the eastern terminus of the line in question? All along the line, the strip of land between it and the seashore is covered with villas, over which wave the national flags of the owners, the Union Jack being perhaps the most frequently seen. Within the memory of young men in Alexandria, this Rammle was a portion of the desert; but the ground has been reclaimed, and is now converted into a site for the summer residences of the Scanderene merchants.

Yet even on this most un-Oriental of lines you have the East always present to you. It is so with everything at Alexandria. I am not speaking alone of the glaring sunlight, of the cloudless, dazzling sky, of the rich sunburnt hue and colour. But everywhere in the midst of this European civilization you come upon the footsteps of the East. Amidst the gaily-dressed French and Italian ladies, with whom the train is crowded, you

meet here and there native Egyptian women, with their faces shrouded from view in a manner you scarcely ever see in Constantinople: the lower half of the veil, from the eyes downward, is black; across the forehead, from the bridge of the nose to the parting of the hair, they have fastened, in some way or other, a small gilt tube, to which the upper portion of the veil is fastened by strings. All along the roads are groves of palm-trees and patches of desert, on which the tents of the Bedouins are pitched; at the crossways there are strings of camels waiting for the train to pass; the roofs of every dwelling, European or Egyptian, are flat and chimneyless; and there, in a stonemason's yard hard by the station, stands a squat, short obelisk, which, you are told, is Cleopatra's Needle.

So you are kept in a perpetual state of mental worry as to whether you are in Europe or in Africa. There, at the corner of Lombard Street (*sic*), is the British Post-office, and on the steps is a negro from the Soudan, black as coal, basking in the sunshine in a white shirt barely reaching to his knees. There is an English bookseller's, where copies of London penny newspapers, of a fortnight old, are offered for sale at fivepence each; and the entrance is blocked by the fruit-stall of a vendor

of dates, melons, and yams. There is a French *café*, with a "dame de comptoir" in rich array, and waiters with white ties, and crowds of Frenchmen drinking "demi-tasses" and "petits verres;" and as you look you are hustled out of the road by a string of camels striding slowly along beneath their heavy weights. The donkeys stand wherever there is a patch of shade, and, bestrid by Englishmen of unmistakeable cut and build, are driven by Arab boys running behind and shouting the oddest jargon of expletives of all lands that ever issued from Christian—or un-Christian—mouth. There are rows of book-stalls which would look at home on the Quai Voltaire at Paris; cigar-shops, with portraits of Mazzini and Garibaldi, which ought rightly to be situated in the Via di Toledo at Naples, or the Corso at Milan. Hard by is an old-fashioned British tavern, where, as you are informed by a fly-blown bill in the window, chops and steaks may be had on the shortest notice; and the only difference from home which you perceive as you enter the sanded bar-parlour is, that the buzzing sound with which the room is filled arises not from flies, but from mosquitoes. So the East and the West are shaken up together in a strange *olla podrida;* and the result is the Port of Egypt.

THE DELTA OF THE NILE.

CAIRO, *October* 26.

How it came to pass that the ancient Romans, even in the Augustan age, should have remained so blind to the beauties of mountain scenery, over which our young ladies and poets go into raptures, is a problem which has puzzled many renowned classical students. I have no light to throw upon the issue, and nothing can be further from my purpose than any approach to the question whether there is any such thing as an abstract standard of natural beauty. All I wish to remark is, that just as we wonder at the lack of taste of the ancients, who deemed mountains a defect, glaciers an eyesore, and eternal snow a monstrosity of nature, so it may come to pass that succeeding generations may marvel at our obtuseness in not appreciating the exquisite charm of low-level lands. A day may come when the exploits of the Alpine Club may be deemed merely silly, and then our descendants will moralize over the inconceivable stupidity of men who

actually ascended nearly inaccessible peaks, that they might lose sight of all the fulness and glory lying in the lowlands of this fair world of ours. Whenever the mountain mania shall pass out of fashion, people will be astonished at the indifference with which we of the nineteenth century ignored the beauties which lay close at our feet. In a book of travels in Egypt, composed with more than average intelligence, I find the Alexandria and Cairo Railroad commended, because it conveys you so rapidly over an utterly monotonous and uninteresting country. Nor do I imagine that the enunciator of this statement is by any means singular in his views. Of all the hundreds of tourists I have conversed with concerning the Overland Route, no one ever alluded to the journey across the Nile Delta except as a tedious day's labour, to be slept through if possible. Yet to me, apart from all the associations with which the scene is rife, there is a beauty about this crossing of the Delta, seldom surpassed among all the landscapes of many lands upon which it has been my lot to gaze. There is no accounting for tastes. Had I lived in the days of the Perizzittes and the Jebusites, I should have belonged to that tribe of idolaters—I forget their name—who built their temples upon the plains, not upon high places. So you must bear with me if I dwell some-

what on the beauties of this dull, dead, flat Delta district.

The day is at its hottest as I drive along the dusty straggling street which leads from Alexandria to the Cairo station. The shops are shut, the very beggars are asleep at their roadside corners. The long shed which serves for a terminus seems to be filled with heated air, and till the train has moved slowly out of the suburbs, and we catch the faint sea-breeze as we crawl onwards, it is difficult to think of anything except how to exclude the sunlight, which, with a strange and perverse ingenuity, keeps glaring in alternately at every window-pane. But we are soon under way; we have lost the last glimpse of the Mediterranean, and we are in the midst of the boundless plain we have to traverse. We are skirting the Mahmoudieh Canal. The high dykes between which it runs, conceal it for the most part from our view; but above the banks we see multitudes of white leg-of-mutton-shaped sails, bulging out with the breeze, and flitting over the surface of the plain. For a time the marsh land, dank with reeds and pools of water, and ponds of sedge, stretches around us. There is not much sign of culture or tillage anywhere. Every now and then we see the black beams of the Eastern wells looming against the sky. Of all the devices by which

water is raised from the earth, that of the beam and stone is the commonest and simplest. A pole is stuck upright hard by the well; on the top there swings a long cross-beam, weighted with a stone at one end, and with a rope and pail dangling from the other. When you want to draw water, you pull down the rope till the pail is sunk beneath the surface, and then the weight of the loaded end raises the full pail to the mouth of the well. In Russia, in Italy, in Hungary, and in the extreme west of America —in all countries, in fact, wherein machinery is little used —you see wells built after this fashion, and it was doubtless by some contrivance of this kind that Abraham watered his flocks in the old Bible days.

Among the marshes you come from time to time on patches of green wheat, well-nigh ripe for the harvest—the fourth and last harvest of the year; you pass rows of cotton plants, standing stalk deep in the stagnant water; you see small islets of rich green sward, on which herds of black shaggy buffaloes browse at leisure. But the water predominates over the land. Not so very long ago this marsh was cultivated ground; but in our great war with France we broke the dykes of the canal, and flooded the plain with salt sea-water, and the desolation wrought then has never yet been made good again: so the wild fowl and

moor-hen have got a home where once there were fields and villages, and what the country has lost in wealth it has gained in a beauty of its own. Round the outskirts of the marsh there runs a fringe of palm-trees, and their tall pope's-head-brush shaped heads grow distinct and clear as we pass on to the Delta country.

There is a look of Holland, doubtless, in the dykes, in the windmills, in every knoll and bank, in the vessels whose hulls are hidden from view, and whose masts seem to be sailing on dry land; but there is nothing Dutch about the infinite richness and variety of growth. The face of the country reminds you somehow of an immense gridiron, the bars being formed of ridges and ditches. Cotton plantations, speckled with their bright whity-pink flowers; golden wheat crops, ripe for the sickle; Indian corn, with its horny comb of yellow grain; sugar-canes, bending beneath their burden of leaves; palm-groves, with the red bunches of dates tied fillet fashion to the cone-shaped bark—fill up in turn the plots and spaces between the rills of water. To this Nile culture there is an inferior as well as a superior limit. If the swell of the ground rises above water-mark, the land is a desert; if the roll of the plain sweeps much below the mark, the land becomes a swamp; and so, here and there, in the very midst of the most

fertile districts, you will come upon a patch of bare desert sand, whereon nothing grows, or upon a mere sedgy marsh, whereon weeds alone find sustenance. But happily the ups and downs of that watered plain are so few in number, so slight in dimensions, that the water reaches well-nigh everywhere, fertilizing everything. There is scarce a break or gap in that long series of fields, unenclosed save by silver threads of water sparkling in the sun, alongside of which the train carries us all too swiftly. The fellahs have not yet left their work, but are still toiling amid the crops. For the most part they are working at the trenches, or else preparing the lands from which the crops have just been cut, for another sowing. In the same field you will see buffaloes, oxen, donkeys, mules, camels—all employed in dragging loads or carrying burdens. There are women hoeing the rice; children bearing baskets upon their heads; and men, women, children—half-naked often, barefoot always—have all got rich colours in their ragged attire, glaring, not inharmoniously, against their dusty skins. There is not a cloud in the sky, not a ripple on the water, not a breath of air across the flat level, and it is only by the lengthening of the shadows we know that evening is stealing on.

Ever and anon the railroad carries us close to a fellah

village. Mud camps are the thought they first suggest to you. Round about them there runs a low wall of baked earth, and within this enclosure are crowded as many mud huts as can be squeezed together. From the carriage window I could only note that they were, for the most part, shaped like Melton pork pies, with a slit in the side, which served for door and window alike, and a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. Dungheaps were piled in the narrow spaces between the huts; cakes of dried camel dung, used for fuel, were stacked upon the roofs; dogs, fowls, and children lay, perched or squatted upon the piles of fuel. Wretched and filthy these earth-dwellings must be, but under a sun which bakes and broils all day long, dirt and filth are toned down to a dry dust colour, which takes away much of the look of misery and squalor I have seen in Irish cabins and the dwellings of Russian moujiks. Such as they are, there is no lack of these mud villages. The whole face of the country teems, not only with vegetation but with life. Far and near you can see the fellah hovels, and at the roadside stations there are towns with stone houses and handsome buildings, and a look of growth and well-doing. Progress is relative, and I can well understand that most travellers coming to Egypt from England or France, or even Italy, are struck with the

backwardness and destitution of the country; but if you come here, as I have done, from Turkey, you are astonished at the movement, activity, and life you see around you. Immense trains full of cotton bales were standing at the stations waiting to be forwarded. At intervals, along the track, you saw factory chimneys rising from the level. Portable engines were to be seen constantly at work in the fields. Canals, locks, bridges, dykes, and field-roads were visible at every turn. There was traffic at the stations; people got in and out, and horses and donkeys were in waiting to carry passengers to their homes. It may be, as I am told, that the Viceroy alone benefits from the prosperity of Egypt. I confess I have not yet heard any satisfactory explanation how this can be. For the present I only note the fact that the prosperity exists.

But I am wandering from the subject of that journey through the Delta land, something of whose rich and rare beauty I would gladly record in such manner as words can do. Who was it that inveighed against the hideousness of railway stations, and their destruction of the picturesque in travel? Let him halt at the station of Teh El Barood and recant his errors. Over the flat roof of the shed there rise the sepia-coloured walls of the town lined with latticed houses, and above these tower the minarets, on whose

round sugar-loaf summits the pigeons perch fearlessly, safe guarded by their sacred character. On the bare whitewashed walls of the station, the shadows of every object on the line are thrown with a vivid distinctness as though they were stamped and scorched. Talk of shadows —why, our English shadows are the mere shades of shadow —the feeble photographs of a proof engraving! On the platform grew the pepper-tree, with its airy foliage; the prickly pear, with its great green slabs of leaves; the palm tree, with its branches sloping outwards, like an umbrella turned inside out; the acacias, with their massive bushes of green. Bare-legged boys, with no covering save a close cotton pinafore, scarcely reaching to the knees and hanging down beneath the waist, sell water from earthen pitchers; and girls dressed in tatters, but with silver bangles fastened round their wrists, offer you pomegranates, red and rich and luscious.

Was it at Teh El Barood there were the pomegranates and the pepper-trees? I am not sure, after all. It may have been at Abou-Hummus, or Birket-es-Sab, or any of the strange-named stopping-places at which our train made halt. At one and all there was the same background to the scene, with more or less of the same decorations. We had stayed for some little time, I know, at one, and as we

moved forth again into the open, the hour for striking off work had come, and the fellahs were trooping home along the towing-path of the canal, by whose side our line ran for a time. Hundreds of little donkeys, with panniers full of garden stuff, trotted along one after the other; whenever the burden was not too great, the driver sat between the panniers, with his bare legs dangling in front over the ass's shoulders. Camels stalked past, led by ropes; yokes of oxen jogged homewards, with the huge wooden collars around their necks, and the pole dragging in the dust between them. Women with baskets on their heads and children in their arms, picked their way amidst the mules and donkeys. There were buffaloes drinking at the water's edge. In little pools, off the main stream of the canal, men were washing their feet and faces in preparation for the evening prayer; over the fields there flew flocks of white pigeons returning to their roosts; in the distance were flights of swallows, coming southward for their winter home; in mid-air, great herons floated with their wings poised, ready to welcome the returning stranger; and upon the great expanse, on the mud villages, on the mosques with their groves of palms, on the sails of the boats, on the rice swamps and the wheat fields, on the long river-side processions of labourers trudging to their homes, on the

rills and pools and tanks, there was spread the glory of the setting sun.

We are drawing near the Nile. The water has risen higher than usual this summer, and the thirst-parched country is drinking its fill. At short intervals along the banks of the river, and its main arteries, are pits sunk in the ground, to which a wheel is placed. The wheel is turned by steam-power in the more important sluice holes, but more commonly by horses or oxen, and by it the water is poured into all the rills which intersect the fields. Night and day the pumps are kept working at this season of the year, and as the evening closes in, the plain begins to twinkle with the countless lamps which light up these water-wheels. The time for the evening prayer has come: on the roadside you see groups of men kneeling, and bowing their heads to the ground; even amid the rattle of the trains you can catch the sing-song sound of their droning chant, and louder than the chant—louder even than the rattle of the train—booms the croaking of whole choruses of frogs, which, with sunset, have come out to take the air, and are chattering after the heat of the day has ended.

It was dark as we crossed the Rosetta and Damietta branches of the Nile, and we could see little but vast

sheets of water stretching far away into the dim distance, spotted and streaked with dark blotches, which in the gloaming you could hardly tell to be the hulls of vessels.

Night comes on rapidly in the East; the moon rises late now, and I peered in vain through the darkness to catch a glimpse of the Pyramids, which rise into view as you draw near Cairo. So we pass on through the night till the gaslights flash into our window, and we are entering the great hall of the Cairo station.

THE CAPITAL OF EGYPT.

CAIRO, *October* 27.

GIVEN a mature age, a height close upon six feet, a weight over eleven stone without your boots, a certain impression that a merciful man is merciful to his beast, and a still keener sense of the ludicrous, and you feel considerable hesitation at mounting on a jackass so small that your feet almost touch the ground, and promenading in this fashion through the crowded streets of a foreign capital. But if you are at Cairo, you must do as the Cairenes do. After all, the donkeys are sleek, well-fed, and strong; and if you don't ride them, somebody else, very likely heavier than you, will. As for the look of the thing, well, if anybody should jeer at you, you will not be a bit the wiser; and moreover, odd as it may seem to you, the notion of your looking—shall I say, like a guy?—does not apparently suggest itself even to the Cairo street urchins. About all southern nations I have always noticed a strange kind of unconsciousness. "To live and let live" is the motto on

which men act in the East; and if the fancy took you to walk about the streets of Cairo upon your arms and without your trousers, I doubt whether you could collect a crowd to stare at you. Moreover, short of going on donkey-back, you will find it hard to get about at all. It is too hot to walk, and the handsome open carriages which ply about for hire in front of the hotels can hardly take you through the narrow streets of the old city. In a short time one particular donkey-boy marks you for his own, and you become the rider of an individual donkey. My jackass's name is Blair Athol, his driver is called Osman, and for a good steady trot I would back the pair against any London cab. The fact that my moke, if I may be pardoned the phrase, is called after a Derby winner, is nowise remarkable. From the English tourists the boys pick up any names they hear mentioned frequently, and amongst the donkey tribe—of Cairo—I have found a Lord Ranelagh and a Mrs. Borrodaile.

Seated on the high saddle, with the red leather pommel in front, and your feet dangling loosely in the long stirrups, you can see Cairo as well as you could see London from the knifeboard of an omnibus; and even if the mode of locomotion were less easy than it is,

you must be singularly wanting in the talent of contemplative enjoyment if you can think much about your personal aspect as seen from the fellah point of view. What difference, after all, can one more strange figure make in a scene where everything is strange? The camels alone seem to transplant you at once into an unknown world. We have all laughed about the Teutonic Herr Professor, who evolved a camel out of his own consciousness; and most journalists are indebted to him for many an illustration in time of need. But since I have become familiar with the camel in daily life, I have learned to doubt whether the German scholar was quite such a fool as we have supposed. A camel is just the sort of animal you may picture to yourself from hearsay description. The camels I meet at every corner are the exact reproductions in flesh and blood of the wooden prototype which, in the recesses of a child's Noah's Ark, first made me acquainted with the shape of the animal. How every man knows his own camel is to me a mystery—each is the counterpart of every other. I admit that my archetypal camel used to lift his head straight up in the air in a way I do not note to be the fashion now. Possibly, however, the artificer sacrificed the interests of abstract truth to the consideration, that

an outstretched neck would be broken in the ark before the toy could be disposed of. Anyhow, these Egyptian camels stalk along with their necks craning forward well-nigh as far as they can reach. Their great splay feet swell out like sponges when pressed upon the ground with each successive tread. Where, as usually happens, there are four or five together in a file, the foremost one carries a bell round his head, the others follow behind, turning neither to the right nor the left, except at the signal of their leader. In the broad open spaces, in the narrow crowded streets, they tramp on with the same long, slow step; and the weight of the burdens they bear upon their backs seems to make no difference in their pace. I have seen camels with immense bales of cotton, with slabs of granite, with bundles of wooden poles strung across their shoulders, which yet moved along with no outward sign of distress or fatigue. They need no whip; their only harness is the halter, which fastens them one to the other; and their mouths are free, except in the case of a few, who, as my guide told me, were "very bad robbers," with no respect for the sacred rights of property, and were therefore punished for their disregard of the laws of "Meum et Tuum," by having iron muzzles fastened round their jaws. In the

city the camel-drivers frequently mount upon the animals, and from the top of the pack-loaded hump, on which they squat cross-legged, they must catch, I fancy, a good many glimpses through the wooden screen-work blinds, which with outstretched arms they could touch on either side of the narrow streets. But to ride upon a camel's back as men ride here is not given to the Frank, and therefore the secrets of the Harem run no risk of being disclosed to the eyes of adventurous tourists. I have seen a camel with two immense panniers swung across its back, a woman sitting on the top of each pannier, a negro and two little children perched between the women on the ridge of the back, and huge bundles of household goods piled up around the hump. The owner stalked in front, smoking as he walked; and after this fashion the family would travel for days through the desert.

"Wa, ah! Wa, ah, Rejol! Wa, ah! Wa'ah, Bint!" Very few hours can be passed in the streets of Cairo before you grow familiar with the sounds of which these words are the nearest approximation I can discover. "Take care, man; take care, girl"—this is the cry which you hear at every moment and upon every side. The Arabic "Wa, ah!" serves here the purpose which the cry of "Guarda" does in Stamboul; and here the demand for such a cry

is even more urgent than in the Turkish capital. If you except the streets of the new fashionable quarter of the Esbekieh, where the hotels are situated, there is not a street in all Cairo wider than Walbrook or Laurence Pountney Lane. Wych Street, where it debouches into the Strand, is spacious compared with most of the alleys you have to traverse. And through these thoroughfares there presses and squeezes all day a crowd well-nigh as dense as that which passes over London Bridge between nine and ten on a week-day morning. It is true there are no vans, drays, or omnibuses in the Cairo streets; but then there are knots of people gathered from daybreak to sunset in front of every shop: there are beggars, fruit-vendors, loafers, squatting upon every patch of shadow; and the idea that a thoroughfare ought not to be obstructed is as incomprehensible to the Oriental mind as to the gas and water companies of London. The streets are strewed with sand and tan, so that you can hardly hear a footstep fall upon the ground; and yet the camels stride, the donkeys canter, and the carriages gallop amidst the crowd, with no other precaution than the shouts of "Wa, ah! Wa, ah!" In front of every carriage there runs a Syce, with bare feet and legs, a white tunic

bound round his waist by a leather belt, a red fez upon his head, and a long stick brandishing in his hand. On he jostles, shoves, and elbows, twirling his stick as a drum-major does his bâton, and shouting, as he pants along, "Wa, ah! Wa, ah!" These running footmen are all boys, and, like many other people in the world, they have suffered cruelly from the progress of civilization. In the old streets they are an absolute necessity, and being compelled by the throng to halt every other minute, they can catch their breath from time to time; but, in the new broad thoroughfares which the Viceroy has laid down, the carriages can and do drive at full gallop. No Cairene who respects himself would be seen driving anywhere without a Syce in front; and the result is that these unlucky lads are obliged to run for miles in the hot glaring sun, shouting as they run and swinging their sticks meanwhile. Very few constitutions can stand the strain, and the trade of an *avant-coureur* is a short-lived and a hard one at the best.

Happily for the foot folk of Cairo, as well as for the running footmen, it is only the Pachas and the foreigners who drive about in carriages. Donkeys are to Cairo pretty much what cabs are to London and gondolas to Venice. With the exception of a few eccentric English-

men and the poorest of the fellahs, nobody ever walks anywhere; the people go about their business or their pleasure, to the bazaars, the baths, the mosques, upon donkey-back; and you must be of very small account indeed if, when you ride upon a donkey, you pilot him yourself. I doubt whether any ordinary Cairo donkey would run at all if he were guided solely by his rider. It is the switch, and even more than the switch, the voice of the lad at his tail, which directs his steps and pace. Mounted upon your ass, you have about as much to do with making him go as you have with driving the cab-horse when you are inside a Hansom. You may interfere by pulling the reins when you seem to be within an inch of riding down women and children; but you will soon find it is safer for the crowd as well as for yourself to trust entirely to the donkey-boy: and as to crying "Wa, ah, Bint!" and "Wa, ah, Rejol!" why, in the first place, the street folk will probably not understand your pronunciation; and, in the second, what is the good of keeping a dog and barking yourself? Moreover, great as my faith is in the boys, my faith in the donkeys is even greater; there is something marvellous in the care with which they will trip aside and pick their way, and step gingerly, so as to

avoid hurting any one by whom they brush. And what makes their skill more wonderful is that nothing delights the donkey-lads so much as making their beasts gallop whenever the crowd is densest. Considering that the drivers have to run themselves, and that the heat is overpowering all through the day, it is odd that they should prefer running to walking; but they take a pride in the speed of their animals, and, however much you wish it, you find it hard to persuade them to take things leisurely.

But, indeed, about the whole of those classes of the community with whom a mere traveller comes into contact, there is visible here an energy and activity of which you see no trace in European Turkey. Hot as the climate is, there is far less of the idling and loitering and dawdling in the streets of which you see so much in Istamboul. It is full noon while I write, and the glare of the sun is so powerful, even through the thick curtains, that the manual act of writing is a fatigue: and yet the Arab workmen are working in the full glare of the sun at a house which is building opposite to my windows. The loose, baggy trousers, fastened together a little way above the heels, which are so universal in Constantinople, are unknown here. Whatever other

complaint you may make against the ordinary dress of the Egyptians, you cannot say it interferes with the free exercise of the limbs. A coarse blouse of blue cotton, reaching down to the knees, and fastened by a sash about the waist, and a white muslin turban bound in folds round the head, constitute the whole of the normal dress of the fellah. His feet and legs are bare, his breast is bare, and when the wind blows his blouse about, or he lifts up the tail to wipe the sweat from his face, you learn—whether you wish for the knowledge or not—that underclothing of any kind is not deemed a requisite of Arabian costume.

The more well-to-do of the community wear linen shirts under the tunic; but the well-to-do are in a decided minority; and, in consequence of this universality of the cotton blouse, there is little to be seen in the streets of Cairo of the infinite variety and gorgeousness of apparel to be witnessed all over Istamboul and Pera, and notably at the bridge of the Sultana Valideh. The female element, which is so striking a feature in Constantinople, is almost wanting in the Cairo streets. Not only is the number of women you meet much smaller, but they are lacking in diversity of costume. Of the common fellah women a great many have their faces entirely uncovered, except

that the shawl droops somewhat over their forehead, after the fashion of Spence's statue of "Highland Mary." The white muslin yasmaks are not to be met in the open highways. When the women are veiled—and I take it that all above the labouring class are veiled—they are veiled with a vengeance. The blue cotton robe thrown over the head, and hanging down to the heels, is almost as much *de rigueur* as the silk ferighee of Stamboul. Under its folds you will every now and then catch a glimpse of a bright blue or yellow silk dress; but of the face you can get no notion. From the little brass or gilt tube, of which I have already spoken as dividing the forehead into two halves, and ending at the bridge of the nose, a black serge veil just the width of the face hangs in front of the dress right down to the feet. In children's fairy-books there used to be a picture of the old woman to whose nose the black pudding stuck by her husband's desire, in the story of the Three Wishes. If you have been familiar at any time with this picture, it is recalled to you by the aspect of these Cairo ladies.

But, instead of the blue cotton capes, you will see every now and then rich silk coverings, and the brass tube across the forehead will be replaced by a white tape, connecting

a white veil with the head-dress; and ladies, enveloped in such puffed-out folds of silk that they look like balloons half-filled with gas, will ride past on donkeys, sitting across the saddle man-fashion, with their yellow slippers stuck in the stirrups. There are women all dressed in white, women in red, and women in black; but of their faces—no matter what the richness or colour of their robes—you can see nothing. In this matter of veiling, as in most other things, there is an absence of pretence which you can hardly fail to notice. Here in Cairo, both for good and bad, you have the real East, not a nondescript medley of East and West. At Constantinople I was always haunted by an impression that the whole scene on which I gazed was a gorgeous masquerade got up regardless of expense, like an Oriental spectacle for an operatic ballet. But in Cairo the thing is real—the life around you is of the East, Eastern. So, also, there is little here of the startling contrast between the magnificence of the wealthy dwellings and the squalor of the hovels which struck me so much in Stamboul.

Had I been the Viceroy of Egypt, I would have so contrived it that the Empress's first view of Cairo should have been taken from the Citadel. A great city ought, according to my views, to be built by a river side, upon the

edge of a great plain, with heights rising close behind it, from which you can gaze upon it near enough to realize its grandeur, and yet far enough off to take in the whole panorama of the town. Very few capitals that I have ever seen fulfil these conditions. Paris, as seen from Montmartre, comes very near to my ideal. The view of London from Hampstead Heath would not be far from it, if that view could ever be visible through the smoke and fog. The spectacle of Moscow from the Kremlin, as I saw it in the pale sunset of a Russian winter day, has hitherto been the closest realization of my fancy I have ever looked upon. But the view of Cairo from the slopes of Mokattam, whereon stands the the Citadel of El-Kalah, surpasses them all in splendour. At your feet, as you pass from out the courtyard of the Mosque of Mohammed Ali, with its cloisters of alabaster pillars, lies the long broad line of Cairo. Over the vast expanse of flat stone roofs there towers a very forest of domes and minarets; beyond the city stretches a belt of palms and acacia-trees; beyond the trees the wide Nile stream, with its lagoons of flooded plains, shines brightly in the sunlight; and further on again, far as the eye can reach, there extend the desert sands, broken only by the masses of the Pyramids.

Hard by is the enclosure where the Mamelukes were massacred, and they show you still the crag from which the one survivor of the massacre leaped his horse down into the valley. Close at hand is the gorgeous Mosque which Mohammed Ali raised upon the spot where he carried out his dread purpose; and within a stone's-throw is the well in which Joseph was left to die by his brethren, when they brought home to Jacob the coat of many colours. There are sceptics who dispute the story. Some men won't believe anything; but really, in these days of spiritualism, when so many demands are made upon your faith, I am quite prepared to accept the statement that this is the very original well in which Joseph was left for dead. There is, too, this merit about the view of Cairo from the Citadel, that on leaving it you come down at once into the true city. It is the stock remark about Constantinople that, if you wish to retain your impression of its magnificence, you should never see it except from a distance. A similar remark could not be applied to Cairo. The city may be dark and dirty within, but the darkness and dirtiness of its streets harmonize with the idea you form of it when you gaze upon it from without. You pass on and on through winding streets so tall, and withal so narrow,

that you can scarcely see the sky between the high stone-built houses, covered as their fronts are with any number of latticed wooden balconies, jutting out to meet each other. And overhead, wherever the street widens out at all, so as to let in the light, they have hung awnings of carpet stuff, or placed rough structures of planks across the street to shut out the sun; and the cold gloom of the streets conceals much, doubtless, of their shabbiness and squalor. On you pass, turning constantly from right to left, and so confused by the crowd of carriages, camels, donkeys, foot-folk, in which you are jostled to and fro, that you notice little of the shops or their inmates till you come out upon the Esbekieh, and find yourself in a quarter of broad streets, open piazzas, theatres, opera-houses, and palaces, all interwoven with groves of palm-trees. Then you go further across the plain, pass a straggling suburb filled with factories, railroads, canals, and wharves, and you are upon the banks of the Nile; and, looking back, you see the bare, sharp-cut heights of Mokattam, standing out so bright and clear against the sky that they seem, though a mile or more away, to be within a stone's throw.

This, as I have said, is the route by which I would have my guests enter Cairo if I were manager in chief

of the Viceregal receptions. As it is, they quit the train in the heart of the manufacturing quarter; and it is only after they have wandered about for some time hither and thither that the beauty of Cairo is made manifest to their eyes.

THE MOOLED EL NEBBEH.

CAIRO, *November* 1.

TO-DAY, according to the Moslem calendar, is the twelve hundred and ninety-eighth anniversary of the birth of Mahomet; and to-day, in consequence, the festival of the Mooled el Nebbeh—the birthday of the Prophet, to quote its popular name—was celebrated with such scant pomp and curtailed honour as is permitted in these degenerate times. I fancy somehow that, if the courteous purveyors who cater for the entertainment of the Viceroy's guests had had things quite their own way, the ceremony of the Doseh would not have been included in the list of spectacles to be witnessed by the invited. Young Egypt is not proud of the ancient customs of the country, and would hardly call the attention of its Frank visitors to the existence of religious rites as barbarous, if not as bloody, as those of Juggernaut. But, having heard that the ceremony would take place to-day as usual, and having requested permission to view it, I found my

request at once acceded to with the promptitude I have uniformly met with whenever I have had occasion here to ask for any assistance. Two khavasses, armed with swords, were detailed for the service of myself and a fellow-tourist, and we were recommended to the special protection of the chief of the police.

It was noon when we took up our station in a narrow street of the Arab quarter in which stands the Mosque of Abu Bekr, the first and foremost of the Prophet's followers. The thoroughfares throughout this district are at all times so thronged with a motley crowd that I think I might have driven through it without noticing that there was more than one of the wonted stoppages of traffic which are constantly occurring in this labyrinth of alleys. Opposite the end of the street stood a tall house, with rows of windows shaded by half-closed Venetian blinds; and when you looked up at the windows, or rather the blank openings—for windows here, as elsewhere in old Cairo, are things unknown—you saw that they were filled with groups of closely-veiled women. One side of the street, from the corner to the doorway of the mosque—a distance, perhaps, of fifty yards—was skirted by the outer wall of the mosque's courtyard; and through the large openings in the wall, covered in

with a framework of iron bars, you could see a crowd, chiefly composed of women and children, peeping and peering into the street. On the opposite side were three small shops—a coffee-house, a locksmith's, and a carpenter's. On the flat roofs of the low one-storeyed dwellings there were numbers of Arabs, men and women, but more I think of the latter, squatting in the glaring sunshine. Within the open shops, among the boxes, anvils, and tables, were placed benches, on which were seated native unveiled women, more painted and bedizened, showing more of their features beneath the draped folds of their head-dress, and using their eyes more freely than is customary with Egyptian dames. In the times when men were strangled to death in England in the sight of day, the most ignorant of foreign spectators at our British "custom" could have guessed who and what were the painted, flaunting women that sat in the windows which looked upon the Debtors' Door at Newgate; and so, strangers as we were, we did not need the information of our dragoman to tell us the calling of the women who had paid for the front seats to see men trampled under a horse's hoof. For such, in plain English, is the ceremony of the Doseh—the spectacle we had come to witness.

In front of the shops, and at the foot of the mosque wall, were long lines of benches, chiefly formed of hurdles, on which rows of turbaned Mussulmans sat smoking; in the narrow roadway between the benches was a shifting crowd of men, women, and children, all of the poorer sort; and amidst the crowd there pushed and elbowed a score or so of Egyptian policemen, with fezes, braided coats, baggy blue trousers, and swords fastened to their red sashes, who, armed with canes or with whips of welted rhinoceros hide, kept up ineffectual efforts to clear a passage. As soon as our party had arrived, the canes and whips were brought into requisition; a number of most venerable-looking Mussulmans, who had taken up the best positions for the view, were summarily ejected from their seats; and in spite of a feeble remonstrance on my part, which might have been more effective had the officials understood one word of my protest, we were installed in the place of these native spectators. I doubt whether any process of reasoning could ever have induced a Turkish official to entertain the idea that anybody could possibly object to seeing fellahs ill-treated; and, what is more odd perhaps, the very men who were cuffed and shoved out of their rightful places did not seem to resent the injustice, but squatted down again on the nearest seat they could find

with apparent indifference. Chairs were brought for our accommodation; coffee and cigarettes were offered to us, as a courtesy, by the superintendent of police; and, under the shadow of the mosque, we sat and smoked and waited for the coming of the procession.

Slowly the street filled, and the crowd became denser. During the earlier period of our watching the scene, the water-sellers, the purveyors of sweetmeats, pushed their way along sturdily; donkeys laden with panniers were driven along without much difficulty; women coming home from the bath, attended by their black servants, elbowed a path somehow; and the constables chatted, or took whiffs of tobacco, or stood, with their arms folded, leaning against the wall. By degrees, the throng grew thicker, all traffic ceased, and the switches of the police were brandished fiercely amidst loud shouts, cries, and wrangling. And so, what with the cries of the street hawkers, the babble of women's voices, the gurgling of the smoke bubbles drawn through the water of the narghilé pipes, there ran through the air a constant droning hum of sound. The sun glared full upon the narrow street, save only where, under the shelter of the wall, we had found a strip of shadow. Every few minutes a trumpet sounded in the distance, and there was a stir

and movement in the crowd; but then, when nothing came, the crowd squeezed back again into the centre of the thoroughfare.

The whole concourse of people within our range of vision—that is, within sight of the mosque—I should put down as about two thousand; and I should doubt if five per cent. of the multitude were persons above the class which lives by day labour. The men in silk robes were very few, the women in silk ferighees still fewer; and, except upon the heads of the policemen on duty, a fez was hardly to be seen. Still, judging of these things as a stranger can, I should say that the crowd—if I put aside the ladies of the front stall rows—was respectable enough. Gradually, however, you saw that the centre of the thoroughfare was crowded more and more with a gang of ragged, barefooted, ill-favoured fellows, who shoved and hustled away the former occupants. In a country where drunkenness, in our European sense of the word, is unknown, and where rags and dirt represent things different from what *we* so designate, it is very hard to form any estimate as to the relative social standing of one fellah above or below another. Still, it seemed to me that the gang of half-clad lads who had now got the centre of the roadway to themselves belonged to a lower

grade than any with which my knowledge of Cairo had yet made me familiar—to a caste which corresponds roughly to the scum and refuse of European cities. Most of them were lads, I should guess, between eighteen and five-and-twenty. All were pale, sallow-looking, heavy-eyed, hangdog-faced fellows, of the stamp whose aspect justified the caution of the police to look close to our watches and pockets. But no attempt was made to dislodge the crew from the position they had occupied. They were the main actors in the drama of which we were to be the spectators.

At last, from behind the mosque, we heard the dull beating of drums, and the crowd on either side the street squeezed close up to the houses; and in the space thus left vacant these lads threw themselves face downwards upon the ground. First they lay as they fell—some one way, some another, some parallel to the walls, some at right angles, some sprawling any way; and as they thus lay grovelling in the dust upon their stomachs, and as man after man cast himself down wherever there was a vacant space, edging his way among those who lay beside him, and wriggling so as to get his feet towards the mosque, under whose walls our chairs were placed, the confused mass gradually fused itself into parallel rows,

lying side by side. With each minute the rows got squeezed together closer and closer. A number of amateur packers volunteered their services and began the work of paving the street with these human paving stones. Taking the men by head or heels, tossing them about as if they were bales of cotton, these fellows wedged them in, back to back, arm to arm, side to side, till they lay there as close and tight as sardines in a tin box. From time to time, when the layer seemed to be so close that it was impossible to wedge another in, a man raggeder even and more wretched-looking than his fellows, would fling himself upon this living carpet, and kick and push and struggle to get himself a place. If he were a boy, as was often the case, the khavasses would drive him away with their whips; if he were grown up, they would punch and push the prostrate bodies till they forced open a link in the living chain. Then, as the roadway disappeared beneath this carpet of bodies, barefooted fellows jumped and leaped upon the long line of backs, yelling "Allah el Allah!" I stood so close to the procession that with a stick I could have poked the men lying down without leaving my chair; and I could see the quivering and writhing of their frames as they lay prostrate, waiting for the coming of the Sheikh. They were packed

so close that it must have been hard for them to breathe with their faces half buried in the dust; and friends placed themselves by their heads, stooping, and fanning them with the flaps of their cotton shirts in order to keep them from dying of suffocation.

Then the sound of music came nearer, and the procession began. As a sort of advance guard, there came a mob of half-naked men shouting, yelling, howling. Some whirled round and round, tossing their arms aloft as they whirled; some were foaming at the mouth, others had snakes coiled round their necks, snakes hanging from between their teeth, snakes twisted and squeezed between their hands; some had bare swords, which they brandished in the air. There were men with skewers stuck through their cheeks; men with iron spikes headed with heavy iron balls, who kept spinning the point of the spike upon their palms till the pieces of sharp jagged steel, attached by chains to the ball, began to fly round and round, and then they made a feint to bring the whirling ball so near their cheeks as to slash and gash nose, mouth, and eyes with the revolving blades,—a feint which, however, was not carried into action, as the police seized them, and pushed them on. And, as the harsh strains of the band came sharper and clearer, the yelling grew more frantic,

the shouts more like the inarticulate cries of animals in pain, than like those of human beings. And then the shrieks, yells, and cries were drowned for a moment as the colleges of dervishes came marching past, each with its sacred banner and its band of music. There was a difficulty in getting the long flag-poles under the lamps which swung across the street; a second difficulty, when the first was overcome, of getting the green flag to flaunt out again to the breeze, bringing to mind the Whitsuntide benefit feast processions which you see in country districts. The music, however, had little resemblance to any melody to which the Druids, or Friends in Need, Foresters, or Hearts of Oak have ever marched. Pipe reeds, flat boards struck with a piece of wood, triangular drums, cymbals of brass, iron triangles, combined to make as hideous a confusion of discordant sounds as it has ever happened to me to listen to. I suppose that there was some attempt at melody, but it seemed to me as if the musicians themselves were carried away by the frenzy of the moment, and played upon their instruments as their fingers chanced to fall, while they joined in the yelling shriek of "Allah el Allah!" On they came, troop after troop of green-turbaned dervishes, with their flags and music; and between every two troops there pressed and pushed the

rear-guard of the mad screaming mob which led the way in front. Over the bodies in the street, dervishes, flag-bearers, players, and their followers tramped forward with unshod feet. Then, at the end of the street, appeared the Sheikh himself, mounted on a white Arab steed. Except in a burlesque, I never saw so huge a turban as that he wore. The enormous folds of green muslin were wound round and round his head till the weight must have been hard to support, even if his brain were clear; and the wearer, to all outward semblance, was in a dead faint. He looked like a man helplessly drunk, or drugged with the fumes of tobacco till he had lost all consciousness of where he was, all power of using his limbs. His head, surmounted by its huge turban, hung down helplessly over his left shoulder, his frame kept lolling to and fro, so that he would have fallen off the saddle if there had not been men propping him up on either side; his mouth was open, the saliva was running down from the corners of his lips. The yelling and the shouting had been well-nigh deafening before; but it swelled to a very Babel of shrieks and screams as the white horse and his rider were led slowly on over the pavement of bodies. Tramp, tramp, tramp, the hoofs came down over the prostrate figures; and even amidst the uproar of the crowd you could hear the

dull scrunch as the horse trod on his way. As the Sheikh moved onwards, the men sprang up from the ground on which they lay. Pale as death, half fainting, gasping for breath, writhing as if in mortal pain, they looked one and all as if they were in various stages of epileptic convulsions. Their eyeballs glared out of their sockets; their features were contorted with hideous spasms; they threw themselves about as if they would dash their heads against the stone walls, and struggled fiercely with the friends whose arms were passed round their shoulders to prevent them from falling to the ground. Everybody knows the face and form of the boy possessed by devils who kneels at the foot of the mount, in Raphael's picture of the Transfiguration. Well, among the men over whom the horse had ridden, there seemed to be any number of lads possessed, from whom the devils had not yet been driven forth. I saw men biting the ears, wrenching open the clenched teeth, pulling at the cramp-knotted arms of these epileptic wretches. I heard shrieks, sobs, and groans. The very women in the shop opposite, who had squeezed forward to see the horse trample on the prostrate men, had turned their heads away. The whole scene was ghastly, horrible.

Meanwhile the Sheikh had ridden or rather had been led on along the street, through the courtyard of the mosque,

right up to the entrance of the temple, treading all the way over rows of bodies. After the ride was over, he dismounted, and was supported into the mosque, where he was apparently brought round to his senses with pipes and coffee. And then, after a few minutes' lull, the howling and the shrieking began again. The snakes were twisted aloft, the swords brandished, the spiked balls set a-spinning; the dervishes began shaking to and fro, swinging their heads up and down; the cry of "Allah el Allah!" beginning low, slow, and faint, rose, swelled, and quickened till it resembled nothing but the bark of a yelping cur; and a second edition of the scene in the street was commenced, though without the main incident of the riding over the bodies. Our police guards hinted to us that our presence in the mosque during the ceremony gave umbrage to the crowd; and, for my part, I was glad enough of the excuse to leave the Mussulman fanatics to themselves and get out into the open air.

Was it all real, or was the whole affair a mere make-believe jugglery? This was the question I asked myself constantly at the time, and have thought over often since. On the whole, my judgment is that it was neither all sham nor all genuine, but that there was more of the former than of the latter. Many of the spectators, who

had nearly the same opportunity of judging as I had, were convinced that they had witnessed an extraordinary manifestation of the extent to which men, under strong religious excitement, become callous to pain and insensible to suffering. I confess I do not share their conviction. All through the scene I have attempted to describe I was perplexed by the following reflection. Here we are, a mere handful of Giaours, in the midst of a dense multitude of Moslem fanatics, supposed to be literally mad with a frenzy of religious passion. Our presence as mere lookers-on, in prominent seats, is of itself an offence and outrage to the orthodox faith of Islam; and yet a couple of policemen with sticks are deemed and found amply sufficient to protect us not only from assault, but from insult. Human nature is a strange compound; and English police records will tell you that men and women who are not deterred from suicide by the fear of death will be prevented by the reprimand of an alderman on the bench. Still, if I could get into a state of mind in which I slashed myself with knives, and threw myself under a horse's hoofs to gratify the frenzied ecstasy of devotion, I should not be hindered by the dread of a policeman's bâton from attacking unarmed strangers, whose accursed looks and smiles were an insult to the holy faith for

which I was prepared to risk a cruel death. Now, as it was manifest that, let the passion of the fanatics have been what you will, they had got it sufficiently under control to avoid any demonstration of ill-will towards us beyond a passing scowl, I was led to question further whether the whole exhibition of intense excitement might not be more or less assumed. Many facts I noted confirmed this theory. The men who threw themselves down were, without exception, of the poorest class, and almost all lads of an age when the religious feelings are assuredly not at their strongest. Then, too, it was odd that exactly the number of fanatics was forthcoming that was wanted to pack the exact distance of some hundred yards over which the Sheikh rode, neither more nor less. This may have been a coincidence, but if so it was a strange one. The bodies were squeezed so tight together as to offer a very strong resistance to the pressure of the horse's hoof; the horse stepped as gingerly as a circus steed trained to pick his way between rows of bottles. Whenever it was possible, the attendants brought down the hoofs so that they fell between the legs of the men lying down; and whenever the horse's foot actually came down upon a body, the fleshy part of the back was the part selected for the footfall. Again, whatever pain the men may have suf-

fered internally, it was clear when they stood up that there were no bones broken; not a drop of blood was to be seen upon their clothes, and yet, as their only covering was a thin shirt, you must have seen the blood had it been flowing freely. So, in the same way, neither the men who cut themselves with swords, nor those who pierced themselves with skewers, nor those who gashed their cheeks with revolving blades, had any mark of blood visible. Now religious passion may prevent you from feeling a wound, but it cannot, short of a miracle, hinder blood from flowing if a vein is opened. Moreover, the moment the spasm passed away, the men who had been writhing in agony a moment before seemed as quiet and collected as if they had been listening to a Sunday sermon. On the other hand, I find it difficult to believe the passionate frenzy to have been altogether simulated. If it was so, the acting was finer than any I have ever seen upon the stage.

With the memory of the scene still fresh in my mind, with the sound of the shrieks still ringing in my ears, I took my seat a few hours later at the second festival which was to be performed on the day of "Mooled el Nebbeh." In a luxurious stall in one of the prettiest and lightest opera-houses I have ever seen, I heard the opera

of Rigoletto, and saw the minuet dance in the first act performed by a company of Parisian ballet-girls. It was the opening night of the new Italian Opera of Cairo, which has been built and inaugurated within eight months of the day when the first stone was laid. The state-box was occupied by the Viceroy and the Duke and Duchess of Aosta. Of the East there was no trace visible, except a few fezes in the stalls, and a box covered in with golden wire gratings, from behind which the ladies of the Khediveh's harem looked on the stage. In the morning the Doseh, in the evening Rigoletto—the Sheikh riding over a footway of bodies, the Viceroy gazing through an opera-glass at a European ballet. These things are no bad illustrations of the Cairo of to-day.

THE PYRAMIDS.

SEKHARAH, *November* 8.

A LONG, broad causeway, lined with acacia-trees, leads from the Nile to the Pyramids of Ghiseh. Substitute poplars for acacias, and you have the counterpart of one of the high dyke roads known so well to travellers in the low marsh-lands of Flanders. The ride through the avenue is a pleasant one enough, and yet there is something disappointing in the discovery that the journey to the Pyramids is as easy and straightforward a matter as travelling, say, from Ostend to Bruges. We had started—a party of four—in the early morning from Cairo; but what with dragomans, sumpter-mules, donkey-boys, and hangers-on, we formed quite a small caravan, and the delay in getting ourselves, our donkeys, and our attendants shipped across the Nile in an open ferry-boat, had brought the morning heat well on before we began our scamper over the Delta plain. The waters were still out, though ebbing rapidly; and on either side the road stretched broad, shallow

lagoons, dotted over with streaks of dry land, from which the waters had receded, leaving behind a rich coating of the black alluvial soil. Here and there, also, were patches of land lying a little above the dead level of the plain, which the floods had left uncovered, but which had been soaked and saturated by rills of water; and on these favoured patches there grew already rich crops of young wheat, verdant with a brightness of green, which even pre-Raphaelite painters, in the days of their early zeal, would have hesitated to portray on canvas.

In many parts the floods, which this year have been unusually high, had broken down the dykes. The embankment of the Cairo and Minieh railroad, which runs along the banks of the Nile, had been literally washed away in several places; and some idea of the strength of the current may be gathered from the fact that the rails, suspended in mid-air across the channels which the waters had scooped out, were bent and curved as if they were molten bars twisted by one of Nasmyth's steam lathes. The causeway, however, had sustained but little injury; and such damage as there was, was in process of rapid repair, so that the road might be in readiness for the expected visit of the Empress to the Pyramids. By the time of her Majesty's return there will be no break in the

road, and she will in consequence see nothing of the manner in which the thoroughfare was made good. About a mile from the Pyramids some two hundred feet of earthwork had been swept down by the inundation, and we had to be ferried over the stream. We had time enough, therefore, to see how public works are carried on in Egypt at the present day. The process is simple enough. Men stripped to the skin, and brown as the sand of the desert, stood up to their waists in water, driving stakes into the ground along the line of the embankment. Into the space marked out by these stakes, great sacks filled tight with earth were thrown, and over them were laid layers of heavy stones, and over the stones again more sacks of earth, till at last the surface of the breakwater, thus constructed, rose above the surface. Then on the top of the breakwater basket-loads of earth were poured, stamped, pounded, and trodden down, till at last the break in the embankment was filled up. So much for the system on which the road was constructed; it seemed to me a cumbrous and ineffective method of road-making; but of that I cannot speak positively. What is peculiar to Egypt is the method by which the labour is supplied. The bales of earth and the stones were brought down to the commencement of the gap by long strings of camels, which

knelt when they reached the edge, were unloaded, and then were marched off again to obtain fresh loads from the desert. Their burdens were very heavy, but otherwise they were not ill-treated, so far as I could see. A camel is an expensive animal, and as all the beasts employed were the property of the Government, they were not likely to be ill-used or over-driven. The real labour and toil was thrown upon the shoulders of the unfortunate fellahs whose services had been impressed for the job. Besides the men employed in driving in the stakes and making the foundation, who were evidently workmen of a somewhat superior grade, there were from four to five hundred men, women, and children, whose task consisted in carrying baskets of earth or stones on their heads from the pit, and throwing them down upon the roadway. They were of all ages, from men wrinkled and grey-haired to little children of seven or eight. Men and women were alike bare-legged, with no covering except their loose blue cotton robes—a covering which, in the case of the former, was worn so loosely as to leave the whole body well-nigh exposed. Men, women, and children worked in gangs together, without any distinction of sex or age. Over each gang there was an overseer with a stick in his hand, and subject to him were two or more under-gangers, mostly

lads or biggish girls, armed with switches. The labourers carried their baskets in single file, each gang of a dozen or so being followed by one of the under-taskmasters, who ran alongside the gang, switching smartly any loiterer or malingerer; the gangers, again, stood at points on the bank a little above the path, along which the gang passed, so that they might, whenever they thought fit, deal a smart blow with their sticks on the shoulders of any defaulter in the file, or on the back of the deputy if the gang were not kept up to their work sharply enough. Somebody was always getting whacked, and I don't know whether it was more painful to see great hulking men hitting out at young girls, or to see the girl-drivers belabouring grown-up men and women with their switches. It was the taskmaster's duty, also, to load these human beasts of burden; and if they complained about the weight, down came the stick till they shouldered their load and marched away. Still, truth bids me say that, brutal as the system was, there was more cry than hurt about it all. In the great majority of instances, the blows dealt out with the stick were not such as to cause real pain, or leave a mark behind. In driving horses there is a process called "flicking," which consists in touching up an animal who will not put his collar to the work, without actually hurting him; and I

should say that, as a rule, these luckless fellows were flicked, not beaten. Still, even during the short time in which I watched the scene, I saw half-a-dozen instances in which the gangers were using their sticks viciously, striking hard, and trying to hurt. The sufferers bore it all—hard words and harder blows—patiently enough. Their labour is forced, but they are paid for it; and as for the kicks, and cuffs, and stripes, it is all in the day's work. The stick has been an institution in the country since the days of Menes, and the fellahs only work at the repairs of the road to Ghiseh, just as the children of Israel worked at the building of the Pyramids.

When the ferry was crossed, amidst a crowd of fellahs —who, notwithstanding the terror of the stick, had gathered round us, with their taskmaster at their head, to beg for baakscheesh—we mounted our donkeys again. A short sharp gallop brought us to the outskirts of the Delta, at the foot of the low range of sandhills which fringe the Great Desert, and the Pyramids towered before us. Those, I think, who would view the Pyramids aright, should see them by moonlight, and from a distance. Many of the great wonders of the world—St. Peter's, at Rome, for example, and the Falls of Niagara—grow upon you the more you gaze upon them. When you first peer into the

dome of the temple which was constructed, as the words over the portico declare, "in majorem Dei gloriam"—when you stand upon Goat's Island, and see the river passing over the grandest of the world's cataracts—your first impression is, Can this be all? and it is only as the scene becomes familiar that you appreciate the fulness of its grandeur. It may be so with the Pyramids; but I own that the nearer I drew to the vast triangular piles, which look so stately when seen in the distance, the stronger the impression became that I was gazing at a very cumbrous and misshapen mass of stonework. I am not going to attempt any description of what has been described so often. I fancy that the most accurate and elaborate enunciations of the dimensions, area, and bulk of the Pyramids would convey to you no distinct notion of what the thing is like. Any schoolboy, to use Lord Macaulay's favourite illustration, would be whipped for not knowing that the base of the Pyramid of Cheops is the size of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and that the height is equal to that of St. Paul's Cathedral. But, even with this knowledge, you can form no notion of the structure. When the Pyramids were coated with their covering of polished stone, they must have been more imposing than they are in their present condition, when nothing is left except the

under structure on which the slabs were laid of old. Gazing upwards from the base, you cannot see the apex, nor can you even realize the slope of the huge wall at which you are staring; you only see an endless series of steps, bulging out one above the other. If good, sensible advice were ever listened to, I should strongly urge all future visitors to the Pyramids to content themselves with going up some twenty steps or so, where they will get as grand a view of the Nile and the Desert as if they climbed right up to the top. I have, however, no hope that the advice will be followed. I was as much convinced, before I went up, that ascending the Pyramid was a mistake, as I was clear about the matter when I came down; and yet I went. And any number of generations of tourists will commit the same folly hereafter, even as preceding generations have done it before. If you are fond of climbing—which I am not—and if you could be left to take your own time, and go quietly alone, it would not be much more tiring to ascend the Pyramids than it would be to walk up Highgate Hill. But you might as well expect to explore Holyrood without a guide as to go up the Pyramid without an escort of Arabs. From the moment you reach Ghiseh to the moment you have left it, you are surrounded by a swarm of Arabs, gibbering, begging, bullying, in the

queerest jargon of broken English, gabbled French, and clipped Italian, with which long travel had made me acquainted. I don't believe I should ever have gone up the Pyramid at all, if it had not been for the wish to diminish for a time the number of my persecutors. When you take your time about it, there is no great difficulty in clambering up a broken step some two or three feet in height; but if you have one stout Arab pulling your left arm out of the socket, another wrenching your right arm in an opposite direction, a third heaving you behind, as if you were a sack of flour, and a fourth pulling your feet about, to place them in what he fancies is a right position—you will find the operation unpleasant. The Arabs run you up the Pyramid very much as a London policeman "runs you in," if you object to see Englishmen and Englishwomen treated as the fellahs are dealt with by their taskmasters. There is nothing to be done, except to submit, and so up you go, scraping your knees, puffing, panting, perspiring. More than once I suggested I had had enough, and should be quite satisfied to go down. I might as well have called out to the driver of the Irish Limited Mail that I had changed my mind, and would stop at the first station we came to. I had got to go, and up I went, till at last I was landed on the plateau at the top. The view

was fine—every view from a height in this country cannot be otherwise than fine—but the view from the Citadel of Cairo is infinitely finer; and if you wish to feast your eyes upon the beauties of that glorious Nile Valley, you had far better ride upon your donkey to the brow of the sand cliffs, which rise behind the Pyramids. Moreover, contrary to the ordinary experiences of life, the descent of the Pyramids is harder and more unpleasant than the ascent. I never heard yet of anybody's rolling down the immense flight of steps which lead us to the summit; but the side bulges out so much that, looking down from the top, it seems as though, if you took a false step, you would tumble off into space. Somehow you are lugged down with a succession of jolts and bumps, and a running fire of requests from your guide to buy Brummagen antiques, or to pay for seeing an Arab run up and down the Pyramid, or to give baakscheesh privately, in addition to the amount you have agreed upon for the whole party. I have always been of Sterne's opinion, and hold, with the author of the Sentimental Journey, that the few odd pence and shillings for which you may be overcharged during your travels give much pleasure to those who receive, and cause little loss to those who give. But these Arabs of the Pyramids there is no possibility of

satisfying. You may give them everything they ask, on the understanding that the payment is to be considered a release in full of all claims; and forthwith some other claimant comes forward to say that he has been overlooked, and to demand baakscheesh on his own account. All you can do is to turn a deaf ear to your supplicants; and if you can enjoy scenery while a hundred beggars are whining and grumbling at your side, you must be differently constituted from the present writer.

To all persons intending to visit the inside of the Pyramids I should say unhesitatingly, "Don't." After all, it may be some satisfaction to say you have been up the Pyramid. I do not myself understand the feeling, but I perceive that other persons entertain it. But there is neither difficulty nor danger about going inside the Pyramid. You have to crawl up and down very narrow and very dirty passages on your hands and feet, through very foul and stifling air, to reach at last a small dark room, wherein you are told that there used to stand the sarcophagus of the King Choufou. Not being an antiquary or a *savant*, you are not much the wiser; and when you have crawled in, you have only to crawl out again. I do not write this with any view to supporting the *nil admirari* school; I only say, as a matter of fact, that the Pyramids should not,

in my judgment, be examined very closely. Seen from afar, their vast masses tower so grandly above the dead level of the Delta, that they seem of all human monuments to be the grandest. It is only as you come near that the sense of their size dwindles away—so, at least, it seemed to me; and the Pyramids will remain in my mind not as I saw them on the spot, but as they first appeared to me from the Mahmoudieh, when their sides sparkled and glittered as the sun set across the Desert.

It may be that the eye can take in a smaller object, like the Sphinx, more effectively than a vast expanse of brickwork. But be this as it may, the image of the lion woman impressed me far more than the Pyramid itself. Everybody is familiar with the Sphinx by photographs, pictures, and statuettes but no delineation I have ever seen has conveyed to me the strength of the great massive shoulders, the look of power in the huge crouching figure, the stern, placid beauty of the massive face. The sand has risen round the great figure as it has risen about everything in this Nile country; and part of the monster frame is still hidden beneath the ground; but the head stands forth in its old grandeur, and the sightless, deep-sunk eyes are still haunted by that look of wistful longing which their unknown sculptor gave to them thirty-four centuries ago.

Even in the presence of the Pyramids, beneath the shadow of the Sphinx, you have got to lunch. So we lay under the branches of a solitary acacia, which has lost its way from the Delta, and found some rill of water for its roots even in the midst of the sand. And we sat and slept, and smoked, and tried to solve the problem, which no Sphinx has ever yet disclosed, how four men can play at whist and all win, till the heat of the day was past, and we could pursue our journey to Sekharah, where we were to halt for the night. All along the valley of the Nile in this district there runs a low range of sandhills, not unlike the cliffs of the Suffolk coast, which form the outer rim of the great desert; between their foot and the Delta there lies a streak of broken moorland, half Delta half desert, half sand half field; and along this moorland lay our road. Five miles an hour over rough ground is by no means bad travelling, and yet the ten miles which separate Ghiseh from Sekharah were done in two hours, with no exertion to ourselves, and no apparent fatigue to our donkeys. Where there was turf we galloped, where there was sand we cantered, where there were stones we trotted; and the one pace we could not induce our donkeys or their drivers to adopt was that of walking. So we went on and on, with the bleak sand cliffs on our right, the water-

covered Delta plain, with its palm-tree forests, on our left; and in the distance, across the thin cloud of white fog which told where the Nile lay sweltering, the high rocky heights of Gebel Giouchi. The floods had driven the riverside folk out of their villages, and on the slopes over which we rode the fellahs were camping out. Stockades of reeds had been run up for the women and the cattle; and on the grass the chiefs and elders sat smoking, while the women squatted apart, and crowds of little children, naked as new-born babes, played about on the sand. Unlike the Arabs of the Pyramids, these villagers never asked for baakscheesh, and more than once we were invited by the Sheikh of the village to stop and take coffee and pipes upon our road. Our conversation with our entertainers was necessarily limited; but we bowed and saluted each other with any number of gestures of respect, and puffed our pipes slowly, and sipped our coffee, and made more salutations, till the visit had been extended to the proper length, and then we mounted again, and took our departure with many expressions of goodwill.

But with these delays and the fading light we were kept longer on our journey than we expected, and it was dark before we turned away from the moorland, stumbled up a track which could hardly be called a path to the

plateau, from which the great Desert stretches thousands of miles away into the unknown distance. Our tent had been sent on beforehand; and when we reached the Pyramids of Sekharah, we found it pitched near the deserted house which had been built for M. Mariette when he was engaged in the excavation of the Serapeum. Our guides and drivers slept on the ground round the tent; five Arabs had been appointed to watch over our safety, though I doubt whether their presence might not have been dispensed with; and we slept as securely, though not so comfortably, as if we had been in our beds at home. Sleeping on the ground, however, is wearisome to the flesh; and the desire of seeing the sun rise in the Desert was not the sole or even the main cause which drove me out into the pleasant cool morning air, when the east was touched with the first faint streaks of white, which foretold the approach of daybreak. As the grey light stole over the landscape I sauntered round our tents, wandering at my pleasure about the sand hillocks. I had fancied, from all the descriptions I had read, that the great Desert was a plain, level as the prairies of Illinois and Missouri. But here in this, its outer fringe, it is a long succession of hillocks and valleys of sand. You climb with labour and toil to the brow of one of the ridges which seems to close

the horizon; and when, after slipping back one step for every two you take upwards, you reach the summit of the hill, you find that a new vista of sand crags and sand billows opens out before you. If you could fancy an ocean whose waters were suddenly turned into sand, just when the tempest was at its height, and the whole face of the sea was lashed up into a series of waves and billows, you would have a notion of the Desert, as you see it about Sekharah. But its utter barrenness and desolation were beyond everything that I had ever pictured to myself. There was sand everywhere—sand, and nothing but sand. There was not a blade of grass, not a shrub or tuft of moss, to be seen far or near. And the sand was dry, and fine, and crisp; such as you can never meet with even on the driest and most heat-parched of English sea-shores. Of human, or even of animal life, there was hardly a trace visible. When I had wandered on a little way and lost sight of our encampment, I seemed to be alone in a death-like solitude. Pyramids half-broken down, and looking like huge cairns rather than the ruins of solid masonry, rose from around the hillocks. On all sides were black mounds where the sand lay thicker than on the level; and under these drifts there lay, as I knew, the tombs of countless multitudes of the dead. Here in bygone

ages had been the burying-ground of the mighty city of Memphis; and in all directions were the traces of graves which men's greed or curiosity, or the wear and tear of time, had robbed of their inmates. Bones bleached by the glare of the sun till they were white as chalk, and mouldered away till they crumbled if you touched them, were scattered all over the surface of the sand; everywhere, too, there were strewn patches of worm-eaten rags, fragments of mil-dewed cloth which had once formed part of the garments in which the mummies were swaddled in their graves. A fox or two, with big bushy tails, could be seen prowling about the sand pits; over the ridges of the hillocks a vulture gloated, flapping his wing slowly as he settled down upon the carrion he had come to devour; and in the distance I heard the howling of a dog; otherwise there was no token of a moving thing—all was lonely, quiet, desolate.

Meanwhile the sun had risen, gilding, as it rose, the mountains on the eastern shore of the Nile with a gorgeous hue of violet pink, such as you see in Egypt, and in Egypt only; and the time had come for our encampment to be broken up. Of the wonders of the Serapeum, of the temple where the sacred bulls of Memphis were entombed in sepulchres built to last for ever, how should I tell you,

unless I could reckon on a patience not to be expected from ordinary readers? I have before me now, as I write, a vision of vast galleries; of huge marble coffins, covered with slabs, such as no mason of our modern time has ever even conceived in fancy; of walls covered with hieroglyphics, of strange figures painted with colours so bright and clear that they seem to have been finished yesterday, of a size and vastness unknown to me before except in the Pelasgic ruins of Italy; and yet the temples and sepulchres I visited are but the outskirts of the city of the dead which lies buried beneath these arid sand heaps. What little has been done in the way of excavation is due to the energy and liberality of the Viceroy. But the work of disclosing the treasures of ancient Egypt to modern eyes is only just begun.

THE STREET FOLK OF CAIRO.

CAIRO, *November* 13.

WHEN you are taken to the Obelisk of Horus, in the city of Heliopolis, you are always reminded by every guide-book, and by every one of your travelling companions who knows how to say the proper thing at the proper time, that Joseph the Patriarch doubtless looked with wonder at the same pillar of stone, whose age even in that remote antiquity was counted by cycles of centuries. I confess that when you have said, in reply, "How interesting!" you have pretty well exhausted the subject. To my ill-regulated mind, a boy with a bag of snakes under his arm, or a drove of camels, affords more matter for speculation than an obelisk; and it is an odd reflection, when you come to think of it, that Pharaoh's daughter, as she went down to the Nile to bathe, Potiphar's wife, the Head Butler and the Chief Baker, must have gazed upon much the same street life, street dress, street folk, as I look on daily

in my wanderings round about Cairo. In the hieroglyphs upon the oldest monuments you can see representations of the same utensils, dresses, features, games, trades, customs, as you behold to-day; and I think, even if you had never heard anything of the immobility of the East, you would know by intuition that the life around you had been going on even as you see it for ages and ages.

The men have the same straight, long faces as you see in the delineations of Egyptian life to be found on the walls of the ancient temples. The Aztecs were said always to betray in their features a family likeness to the Egyptians; and about the streets of Cairo at the present day you meet with scores of stunted, impish-looking, bird-faced children, with whom the Aztecs might claim kinship on the score of resemblance. What the born hue and complexion of the native Egyptian may be it is not easy to tell. Even the little children who roll about stark naked on the roadside are so sunburnt, so caked with coatings of dust, so soaked in Nile mud, that their skin is of the neutral sepia tint which lies half-way between black and white. Indeed, among the street folk here it would be very difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the descendants of Ham and Japheth.

I have seen native-born Egyptians so white and fair that you might have taken them for Anglo-Saxons. I have seen others so swarthy, tanned, and dark that you have to scan their features closely to be sure that they are not of negro origin. It may be the consequence of this infinite variety of skins—from ivory white to ebon black—that in Egypt there is apparently no negro difficulty. Philosophers, of whom I know many on either side the Atlantic, who are fond of expatiating on the inherent incompatibility of white and black, and building up all kinds of elaborate theories to explain why it is that the two races never live, never can, would, or should live, in close contact with each other, would do well to come to Egypt, and see how the problem of the "irrepressible nigger" is solved in the land of the Pharaohs. Between Sambo and the Arab fellah there is no kind of distinction or difference, any more than there is in England between men with blue eyes and men with brown; and the fact that in every gang of labourers, in every group of idlers, in every coffee-house, shop, and store, you see negroes with crisp woolly hair, sparkling white teeth, and jet black skin, adds much to the diversity and variety of the Cairo streets. But for the negro element, with its passion for bright colour, there would be a certain

sameness about the aspect of the Egyptian wayfarers. The fez is confined exclusively to the officials of the Government; the white turban and blue cotton robe are universal; and the sole variety in head-gear is that some of the younger and poorer fellahs substitute for the turban a sugar-loaf-shaped brown felt skull-cap. Of the better sort of women—of those who dress in silks and muslins and wear yasmaks and ferighees—there are not many visible. You never meet in the streets the groups of gaily-dressed Turkish women with flimsy make-believe veils who form so pleasant an object in the alleys of Stamboul. There is no trysting-place of the Cairo ladies like the Valley of the Sweet Waters; and on the promenade of the Choubra Road, where the fashion and quality of Cairo take the air in the afternoon, you scarcely see half-a-dozen carriages occupied by Egyptian women out of the hundreds with which the long avenue is crowded. Driving along this Cairene Corso, it is difficult to imagine you are in an Eastern city. The carriages are filled with English, French, and Italian ladies, dressed in Parisian costume. A good number of the male occupants of the carriages wear the fez, but their dress and features are unmistakeably Frankish; and but for the syces running in front of each barouche, you

would fancy yourself in Europe. In the same way, the Esbekiah, with its hotels, and theatres, and European shops, is European to an extent to which Pera has no claim; while, on the other hand, the moment you leave the great semicircular Piazza, and pass into the network of streets which surround it on every side, you get into a town far more purely Oriental in its character than any portion of Istamboul. Egypt, in fact, is, if I judge rightly, more European, but less Europeanized, than Turkey. The civilization of the West has been transplanted to the banks of the Nile to an extent to which Turkey can show no parallel. But, on the other hand, the Egyptians have not been subjected to the same close contact with Christian races which has done so much to break down the traditions of Islamism; and the result is, that, between the civilized life with which the Viceroy has surrounded himself, and the life of the vast mass of his subjects, there is a complete and sharply-defined division.

Thus it happens, at Cairo, that, though you live in a European hotel, after European fashion; though you take your drive along a European promenade; though you may go to Italian operas, French plays, and Parisian *cafés chantants*, you are yet in the midst of a civiliza-

tion which, to judge from the delineations on the walls of the Temple of Serapis, has changed but little since the days of the Pharaohs.

It is this contrast which to a tourist makes the charm of Cairo. After luncheon at your hotel, for instance, where you have pale ale and mixed pickles, Harvey's sauce and Keiller's orange marmalade, on the table—after a smoke in the reading-room, where you find nothing but English newspapers, and hear nothing but English spoken, and have your coffee brought to you by waiters in shabby black coats and whitey-brown ties, who might pass muster in an English hotel—you are driven out in your open carriage to see the performances of the Howling Dervishes. You pass through a narrow stone passage, with a soldier or two stationed in it, into a courtyard surrounded by wooden galleries, and protected from the sun by an awning hung from wall to wall. In one of these galleries you find most of the travellers with whom you have just lunched at the hotel, and take your seat amongst them. In the courtyard below the howling has commenced. At one side of the court there sit, cross-legged, half-a-dozen musicians playing on tambourines, flutes, and drums. Round the three remaining sides stand, close to each other, some thirty

men howling and bowing to the utmost of their power. They are of all ages, from a bright-eyed, smooth-faced lad of ten, to a wrinkled grey-haired old man of seventy. They all wear heavy muslin turbans, most of them green in colour, and as the motion of the nodding becomes more rapid one turban after another falls to the ground, and their long, matted, thick hair tosses about their faces as they bend and drop their heads. An aged dervish, who acts apparently as master of the ceremonies, walks slowly round and round, urging the performers to increased exertions. A low, monotonous chant is kept up by the dervishes, and as the cadence swells and ebbs their motions keep time to the air. To throw your body about without moving your feet, to let your head drop as if your spine were broken, and then to jerk it backwards with a sudden spring, as if your body were a leg with a joint at the knees, and to keep meanwhile shouting out some gibberish of prayer without pausing to take breath—this is the duty of your howling dervish. Faster and faster went the chant of the singers, quicker and quicker the jerking and bobbing, louder and hoarser the guttural, panting shriek of prayer, till suddenly one of the company, who had distinguished himself by the vehemence of his gestures, tottered out of the ranks

into the open, threw up his arms with a scream, and fell backwards on the ground as if in a fit. His brethren gathered round the man, raised him up, and set him on his legs, panting and gasping for breath; and then the performance was over, this dropping down in a dead faint of one of the dervishes being the regular termination of the service. The turbans were put on, the score or so of Arabs who had squatted round the courtyard sauntered away, and the dervishes went home to rest till the next Friday, when the performance would have to be gone through again. I am quite prepared to admit that there may be some kind of religious enthusiasm in this peculiar worship; but I am, I own, sceptical as to the possibility that any set of men can work themselves up regularly into a state of religious frenzy at 1.30 P.M. every Friday throughout the year.

The Dancing Dervishes supply a more elegant though less sensational exhibition, for the edification of the faithful. When the howlers have finished their performance, the dancers commence theirs. To spin round and round, like a teetotum, with your arms stretched out at full length, the palm of the right hand being held up towards the sky, the palm of the left hand down towards the ground, is the especial talent for which these der-

vishes are famous. Their long petticoats are weighted round the rim, so that they spread out as if they were stretched over crinolines, as the dancers spin round and round. The step to which the men dance is very like that of the old Trois Temps waltz; and I should say that every Viennese student could waltz down the Cairo dervishes, the longest of whose spins never exceeded five minutes. For the first quarter of an hour the spectacle of these men, with their tall white felt caps and their downcast eyes, their tight jackets and their bulging petticoats, was curious enough; but the sight soon became monotonous. Apparently, the natives had found out the fact that the show was not an amusing one; for, if it had not been for the European tourists present, there would not have been half-a-dozen lookers-on; and even the beadle, whose function it is to drive off with a stick the urchins who tried to peep through the open windows and see the show gratis, had pretty much a sinecure. I may be wrong; but I fancy that the howling and dancing business is as much played out in Egypt as spirit-rapping and table-turning are in England.

But the real shows of Cairo are not the dervishes, or the snake-charmers, the magician, or the exhibitions of legerdemain, the description whereof forms part of your

traveller's regular stock-in-trade. It is the sights you stumble across, and are not taken to see, which to me are the charm of Cairo. The wedding processions are a never-failing source of delight. First comes a band of music—banjos, tambourines, and cymbals. Then come the mummers, rising in number from two upwards, according to the wealth of the bridegroom's parents. Every few minutes the mummers stop and go through their performance, for the entertainment of the guests. Then come horses, on whose high saddles are perched little boys decked out in gilt and spangles, who have just undergone the ceremony of circumcision in honour of the day. Next follow the bridegroom and his friends, walking in twos together in the bravest of their garments; and behind them walk the women, with their faces closely veiled, the bride being distinguished from the rest by a canopy of silk, which is held over her head. Numerous dancing-girls and singing-women close the procession. It is pleasant, too, in the evening, when the work of the day is over, to see the groups of men who squat in front of the coffee-shops listening to the story-tellers. To the accompaniment of a guitar, strummed by the assistant, who sits beside him, the story-teller spins his yarns; and a running chorus of

grunts, which, I suppose, correspond to the parliamentary "Hear, hear," shows when the lecturer has hit his public. Very little reliance can be placed on the information you derive from dragomans; but, whenever I have asked what was the subject of the recitation, I have been told by my informant that it was about the days before the foreigner ruled in Egypt. Can it be that any touch of the nationality fever has made its way into the fibre of the fellahs? Then there are the boys with performing goats, the boys who carry snakes in a pouch slung round their neck, and twist them about, as if they were pieces of cord, for the delectation of the passers-by. And, in the outskirts of the town, you cannot fail, especially on market days, to come across yet odder incidents of life in Cairo. You see a knot of people collected, and find the singing-girls plying their trade. Their faces are barely covered; their foreheads, ears, and necks are decked out with pieces of gold; their painted eyes are used freely; and, even without knowing a word of what they sing, you can tell from their leers, and from the laughter of the men, as each point is emphasized by proper or improper gestures, that the lays are of the kind which you hear sung by gipsy girls on English racecourses. However this may be, there is nothing ever

seen in England, or for that matter in Europe, analogous to the dances which you may see performed here in the public streets by dancers, male and female. Miss Harriet Martineau, in her Eastern travels, remarks that the Egyptians, in their public spectacles, are addicted to the worship of Organism. I don't know how you can allude more delicately to a most indelicate exhibition. What is at once curious and painful to witness is the intense delight with which these parodies of profligacy are received by the crowds of men, women, and even children, who squeeze in a circle about the performers. Happily there are shows enough in Cairo without the dancing-men and dancing-women; and indeed you hardly want shows at all in a place where everything and everybody are to you the most novel and curious of spectacles.

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

PORT SAÏD, *November* 7.

I HAVE said but little as yet of the Suez Canal. Before I had pursued my researches in Egypt long, I came to the conclusion that to repeat the stories related to me, and still more the anticipations expressed by my various informants, would only be giving a wider circulation to gossip, always idle, and for the most part malevolent in its character. I think Pontius Pilate would have been less severely criticised for his scepticism as to the existence of truth, if his critics had realized the fact that he was a European living among Orientals. I cannot conceive of a life more calculated to weaken your faith in veracity than one passed in Turkey or Egypt. Everybody assumes, as a matter of course, that everybody else is cheating his neighbours, that the obvious explanation of any act cannot possibly be the real one, and that some mysterious and discreditable intrigue is always at the bottom of all apparently straightforward dealings. This being the settled rule

of life, it is not strange that an enterprise which has threatened so many interests, offended so many vanities, and given birth to so many jealousies as the Suez Canal, should have been, and should still be, the subject of infinite mis-representation, intrigues, and delusions. Apart from the instinct which impels all dwellers in Eastern lands to attribute underhand motives to every undertaking, there were certain exceptional causes, which have, I believe, obscured the judgment of foreign residents in Egypt as to the true prospects of M. de Lesseps' enterprise. In the first place, the canal, if it prove successful, will interfere with the trade of Alexandria, with the Overland route, with the established lines of traffic throughout the Isthmus, and with the importance of Cairo as a commercial capital. It may prove—I think ultimately it will prove—that all Egyptian interests will profit immensely by the new channel between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. But this is, after all, only a matter of opinion; and it is not in human nature that merchants, traders, bankers, and hotel-keepers should look favourably on a project which will jeopardize the undertakings in which their own fortunes are embarked. It may be said that this explanation for the disfavour with which the Suez Canal is undoubtedly viewed among the English colony in Turkey

and Egypt can apply only to the commercial section of the community; but then it must be remembered that the official world is necessarily affected by the public opinion of the resident traders, and also that the Suez Canal has unfortunately been regarded as the battle-ground between French and English interests. You must have lived, as it has been my lot to do at different times, among English residents in a foreign land to understand the intensity of English prejudices. There is a good side to the intense individuality of our nation; and I have no doubt no small part of our greatness is due to the fact that the Englishman abroad is more wedded to English ideas, more proud of English institutions, more convinced of English supremacy, than the Englishman at home. On the other hand, this individuality keeps us, when abroad, strangers in a strange country; and in consequence, among all English residents in foreign countries, and more especially in Eastern countries, there exists a determination to assert the superiority of England over every other land, and more particularly over France, which is almost unintelligible to the ordinary Briton of the present day.

So it has come to pass, that as the canal was a French work, carried on by French capital, constructed by French engineers, and patronised by the French Government, the

Anglo-Egyptian world set their faces dead against the scheme, and determined with one consent that the canal never ought to be made, that it never would be made, and that, if made, it could never be kept open. All this is intelligible enough, though I confess the animus displayed in the matter is bitterer than I can account for. Considering that the work, if carried to a successful issue, will be an immense boon to humanity, it would be better perhaps if our countrymen in the East were less ready to catch at every unfavourable rumour, and less candid in the expression of their desire that it may prove a failure. However, you must take men, and above all, Englishmen, as they are; and I know my own people well enough to be sure that, if once the success of the enterprise is established, they will be the first to profit by it. Still, the partisan feeling that has been introduced into the question of the Suez Canal renders the opinion of the British and French residents about equally untrustworthy; and, as they are the only people who take the trouble to form an opinion at all, the inquirer after truth is compelled to rely mainly upon his own observation. From putting together the different accounts I have heard, and from what I have now seen myself, I have formed an opinion of my own as to the prospects and position of this great

undertaking. I give it not as the opinion of an expert, but of a disinterested observer. But before I speak of the canal let me say something of its founder and creator.

Ferdinand de Lesseps will never see sixty again. I am afraid for his sake he will not be long in seeing seventy; and judging from his look of health, strength, and energy, I have every reason to hope he may see any number of years more. He belongs to a type of old men—if I may apply the word "old" to a man apparently in the very prime of life—whom you meet with only in France, and chiefly in the south of France; a type which, if I remember rightly, Thackeray mentions in the Newcomes as one of the handsomest he knew. Hair as white as snow, a complexion clear and red as a rosy apple, dark flashing eyes, and a black moustache, make up as handsome a face as you would wish to see. A spare, short, lithe figure, clear-cut features, small hands and feet, a smile of excessive sweetness, add to the charm of M. de Lesseps' appearance. There is something English about his scrupulous neatness and simplicity of address; and, indeed, as he told me the other day, his family were originally of Scotch extraction, having come over to France with James II. A Lesseps, Scotch readers may be curious to learn, was the architect of the cathedral at Edinburgh (St.

Giles's). His father was sent out to Egypt as consul by Napoleon I. after the Peace of Amiens, with orders to select a candidate for the Pashalik who would counteract the influence of the Mamelukes who were favourable to England, and by his advice Mehemet Ali received the support of the French Government. His mother was a Spaniard, and by her he is not a very distant cousin of the Empress of the French; and the young lady whom he is about to marry as soon as the fêtes of this month are over is a British subject, having been born in the Mauritius. But the most noteworthy feature about the man is his wonderful *bonhomie* of manner—cordial without fulsomeness, frank without familiarity, friendly without suspicion of insincerity—which I, for one, have never seen equalled. I cannot understand anybody's not being at his ease with Lesseps. I can still less understand anybody's taking a liberty with him. I dwell upon this fact because I am told, and can readily believe, that this singular grace of manner, this sweetness of disposition, have contributed in no small degree to the triumph of his enterprise. His absolute confidence of success, his unvarying spirits, his dauntless energy, and his power of inspiring a feeling of personal regard among all persons with whom he came into contact, have carried him through difficulties,

delays, and disappointments which would have worn out the heart of any ordinary man. It is only fair, too, to say that, among the numerous charges and insinuations I have heard brought against the projector of the Suez Canal, I have never, in this country, where he is known, heard the assertion made that he has sought to make any private profit for himself. With endless opportunities of enriching himself, he has been contented with the by no means exorbitant salary he has received from the company; and if, as seems to me probable, the shareholders lose their money, they will have the consolation, such as it is, of knowing that it has not gone into the pockets of their manager. As an illustration of the energy and vitality of the man, let me mention the disposal of one of M. de Lesseps' days during the greater part of which I had the pleasure of being in his company. At half-past eleven at night, he, being then in Ismailia, received a telegram which recalled him to Cairo. A special train was ordered, which brought him to the capital, a distance of a hundred miles, by four in the morning. The hours before daybreak were spent in arranging the papers and documents he had to submit to the Viceroy. An audience at the palace, and various business interviews, occupied his time till one, when a special train took him back to

Ismailia. During the whole of the four hours' journey he talked without intermission to the occupants of the carriage, of whom I was one. On arriving at Ismailia he mounted his horse, a very spirited Arab, and rode off to inspect the works. At seven he had a dinner-party of some twenty persons, at which he was the most talkative and most animated of the persons present; and when I left him, late in the evening, he was just beginning his work of inspecting the reports of the day's progress. It is possible that M. de Lesseps may be an enthusiast; but I am convinced he is neither an adventurer nor a charlatan.

BEFORE THE OPENING.

SUEZ, *November* 10.

FOR the last four days I have been cruising about the Suez Canal. With the exception of one interruption, about which I shall speak presently, I have passed without a break from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The result of my observations has been to convince me that the Canal is a success. Let me, however, explain shortly what I mean by the word "success." If the opening of the Canal depended upon the permission of an Inspector of the Board of Trade, I think there would be very little chance of any traffic's passing over the route for weeks or months to come. I do not feel sanguine as to the prospect that the passage from sea to sea will be effected without hitch or breakdown on the 17th; nor should I be in the least surprised if after the opening the Canal had to be closed practically, if not nominally, in order to complete the excavations. But I have no doubt that ships drawing sixteen feet of

water can, and will, pass henceforth from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. Whether the number of ships which will find it worth while to pay the charges required for the passage of the Canal will be sufficient to make the enterprise a remunerative one is a fact which experience alone can determine. M. de Lesseps himself calculates that the receipts for the first year will be twenty-five millions of francs; that of this amount five millions will be required for repairs, five for the working expenses of the Canal; while the fifteen millions left will suffice to pay a dividend of five per cent. On what data this calculation is based, and how far they are correct, is a matter on which I can express no opinion.

One striking testimony to the apparent success of the Canal is contained in the fact that, somewhat contrary to my expectations, there is very little to describe in passing through it. No doubt, given a certain experience in writing, it would be easy to make any number of columns out of the narrative of one's journey through the Canal as it would be to produce a like amount of letterpress about one's journey through the Watford Tunnel. But, when you have said that for some hundred miles you sail along a broad ditch, with high sand-banks on either side, over which at rare intervals you catch glimpses of a sandy

desert, you have given a picture of the Canal proper, the details of which you may arrange and re-arrange as you like, but of which the outline, foreground, and background must remain the same throughout. I think, therefore, the best thing I can do is to write out in full such stray notes as I have taken down during my journey from Port Saïd to Suez.

Port Saïd, as seen from the Canal, is a bright, flourishing town, bearing, like all the towns on the Canal, a striking resemblance to the newly-settled cities of the prairie. Upon the map it possesses squares, boulevards, theatres, churches, and streets without end. In reality, its half-finished rows of houses end for the present in the desert. Still, there is room enough to build a city at the mouth of the Canal as large as Alexandria. The only serious obstacle to the prospects of Port Saïd as the site of a great city is the absence of fresh water. The town is supplied with drinking-water from the Canal des Eaux Douces at Ismailia, where two engines of 25-horse power are at work night and day pumping the fluid through iron pipes to Port Saïd, a distance of forty miles. Before long it will probably be necessary to prolong the canal which carries the waters of the Nile from Cairo to Ismailia to Port Saïd —a work which, like many other improvements needed to

complete the undertaking, can be effected only at a heavy outlay. The harbour, however, about whose construction such doubts have been expressed, is now an accomplished fact. Two converging stone piers have been built out into the Mediterranean from the coast, the longer and more westerly of the two being a mile and a half in length, the shorter about a mile and a quarter; the distance between the lighthouses at the ends of the two piers is half a mile. English and foreign naval officers who have inspected the harbour agree in saying that it is superior to Alexandria as a port; and the inner docks are now crowded with large large steamers and sailing vessels, the French flag being naturally predominant. Nor have there been any signs as yet of the predicted silting-up of the harbour. Along the western pier there is, indeed, a constant accretion of sand from the deposits of the Nile; and it is said that a sort of sandbank is thus gradually forming itself along the mole. But, at its present rate of deposit, very many years must elapse before the shoal reaches the mouth of the harbour; and in that event there will be no difficulty in extending the piers. So, at least, the partisans of the Canal declare. At any rate, the risk of the harbour of Port Saïd's being choked with sand is a remote one, and may be dismissed from consideration for the time being.

From Port Saïd to Kantara, a distance of twenty-eight miles, the Canal runs through Lake Menzaleh. So the map states, and the statement is true, though not in the sense which the words would convey to ordinary apprehension. Lake Menzaleh is the largest of the sheets of water with which the charts of the isthmus are studded over; but then this lake is nothing more than a shallow lagoon, whose waters were of no practical service towards the formation of the Canal, but were positively detrimental. Of all the portions of the undertaking, this one—M. de Lesseps assures me—was really the most arduous, though it attracted the least attention. A trough had to be dug through the bed of the lagoon; on either side this trough high sandbanks had to be erected, and the difficulty of making a solid foundation for these sand walls was found to be extreme. The difficulty, however, has been surmounted; and there is no appearance of the embankment's being worn away by the action of the water, or of any filtration or mingling of the waters on either side. Throughout this section, from Port Saïd to Kantara, the Canal is finished. I do not mean by so saying that no further work may be required on this portion. All I mean is, that the contracts for cutting the section are held to be performed, that there are no works going on along it, and that the

channel is clear from all obstructions. In consequence there is here not much to note. The average width from bank to bank is about that of the Thames at Mortlake; in the centre there is a track a hundred yards wide, marked out by poles stuck in the water, with little flags floating from their tops, which show the course ships passing through the Canal are to follow. Within this track there is—so the engineers of the company assert—a minimum depth of eight mètres, or about five-and-twenty feet: and the officers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, who have recently taken soundings, agree in thinking that a vessel drawing twenty feet can pass along this reach with perfect safety. The reach, I should add, is as straight as an arrow, and there is therefore no difficulty, as there is in other portions of the Canal, about keeping within the track. The vessel I made my journey in was a little steam-launch, employed in the postal service of the company, which had been kindly placed at the disposal of our party. Even from the roof of its deck cabin it was impossible in most places to look over the top of the banks; and therefore the journey was necessarily more monotonous than it would be if the Canal were traversed in a large steamer. Still every now and then we caught sight of the broad lake beyond the banks, and of the desert further on.

The waters were covered with flocks of wild ducks; white pelicans stalked about the shallow marshes; on the horizon were lines of trees and rows of white houses. So at least the testimony of our eyes assured us; but the sailors declared that what we saw was only the mirage of the desert: and as it would have been a most surprising fact if there had been either trees or houses in the position where we saw or seemed to see them, I have no doubt they were right.

At Kantara the Canal crosses the track of the highway between Cairo and Syria. A floating bridge carries the caravans across, and even while we waited to take in water long strings of camels led by Bedouins came down to the water's edge. Some day or other Kantara may be a flourishing city. At present it consists of two small restaurants, the Hôtel de la Poste and the Descente des Voyageurs, where you are served with indifferent food at Boulevard des Italiens prices. From this halting-place to El Ferdane, that is, to the southern extremity of Lake Ballah, the Canal still passes through a sand cutting raised within a mere. The lake, however, though a considerable sheet of water on the map, is in reality almost dried up, and therefore the construction of the Canal was comparatively easy, the sand not being immersed in water as was

the case in Lake Menzaleh. In the section which is still incomplete, the "couloirs," without which the enterprise would never have been conducted to a successful end, were in full operation. According to the original programme, the canal was to have been constructed by forced labour provided by the Viceroy. I have spoken already about this system of labour, in which the stick plays so prominent a part; and I should be most unwilling to say one word in its palliation. As a matter of fact, however, it is right to state that the "corvée" has been for ages, and is to the present day, the mode in which public works are constructed in Egypt; and that Turkey, of all Powers in the world, is not assuredly the one to object to its application. To any one who knows the fact of the case, it is impossible to doubt that the real object of the veto which the Porte placed upon the employment of forced labour in constructing the Canal, at a time when the works were in full progress, was to place an insuperable obstacle in the way of its completion. It so turned out that the tactics which were intended to deal a deathblow to the enterprise secured its success. With spade labour the trench could probably not have been dug; but the necessity of substituting machinery for manual labour led to the invention —or perhaps I should more truly say to the adaptation—

of the machines by which the work has been carried out to a successful issue. In its general character, the process of construction can be explained without much difficulty. A rough trough was first dug out by spade work. As soon as the trough had been dug to the depth of six to twelve feet, according to the character of the ground, water was let in. It was often urged beforehand, as an objection to the Canal, that the sand would not hold water. It was found, however, by experience that the effect of the water was to harden the sand into a sort of paste comparatively devoid of any porous character. The testimony of my own eyes is sufficient to convince me of the improbability that the bottom of the Canal will require either puddling or paving. The real question—to my mind almost the only important question—as to the success of the Canal, is whether its width is sufficient to enable vessels of any burthen to sail through it without risk of accidents. My own impression is that the channel will have to be doubled in breadth before the Canal can be used as a maritime thoroughfare. The cost of such widening the chief contractor, M. de Lavallé, estimates at two millions and a half sterling; while he calculates the expense of keeping the present cutting clear from silting-up at forty thousand a year.

To return, however, to the process by which the present trough has been constructed. After the water had been let in, the steam dredges were floated down the stream, moored along the bank, and set to work. These dredges are of two kinds. The great "couloirs" consist of a long, broad, flat-bottomed barge, on which there stands a huge framework of wood, supporting an endless chain of heavy iron buckets. The chain is turned by steam, and the height of the axle is shifted from time to time; so that the empty buckets, as they revolve round and round, shall always strike the bottom of the Canal at a fixed angle. As they are dragged over the soil, they scoop up a quantity of mud and sand and water; and, as each bucket reaches its highest point in the round, it discharges its contents into a long, open, iron pipe, which runs out at right angles to the barge. The further extremity of this pipe stretches for some yards beyond the bank of the Canal; and, therefore, when the dredging is going on, there is a constant stream of liquid mud pouring from the pipe's mouth upon the shore, and thus raising the height of the embankment. When the hollow scooped out by the buckets has reached the required depth, the dredge is moved to another place, and the same process is repeated over and over again. These stationary dredges, however,

though very effective, require much time in moving, and the lighter work of the Canal has been chiefly effected by movable dredges of a smaller size. These machines are of the same construction as those I have endeavoured to describe; the only difference is, that the mud raised by their agency is not poured directly on shore by pipes attached to the dredges, but is emptied in the first instance into large barges divided into partitions, and moored alongside the dredge. Each partition contains a railway truck, and when the barge is filled it steers away to the bank, where an elevator is fixed. The trucks, filled with mud, are raised by a crane worked by steam-power, and placed upon inclined rails, attached to the elevator, which slope upwards at an angle of forty-five degrees towards the bank. They are then drawn up the rails by an endless rope, and as each truck reaches the ends of the rails its side falls open; the mud is shot out upon the bank, and the empty truck returns by another set of rails to the platform on which the elevator is placed, and is thence lowered into the barge to which it belongs. As the elevator can unload and reload a barge much faster than the dredges can fill it with mud, each elevator is fed by half-a-dozen dredges, and thus the mud raised from the Canal by several dredges is carted away without difficulty

at one and the same time. As these floating dredges are much easier to shift than those encumbered by the long couloir pipes, the work of excavating the bed goes on much more rapidly. But in places where there is any great mass of earth or sand to be removed, the large couloirs can scoop out a given volume in a shorter time.

South of Kantara the dredges are very busily at work; and the channel of the Canal is blocked up with such numbers of steam barges, dredges, and elevators that, as you approach it from the north, you seem to be entering a very labyrinth of gigantic cranes, poles, pipes, and revolving chains of buckets. But as you draw nearer you find that every machine is working quietly and steadily, and you pass the monster machines one by one without stoppage or delay, till, after a time, you find yourself again in clear water at the southern extremity of Lake Ballah. Indeed, what struck me most here—as in every other section where the works were still proceeding—was the perfect order, quiet, and lack of confusion which characterised the works. Though when I sailed along the Canal there were only six clear days to its formal opening, and though Cairo was rife with stories of several mishaps which had occurred, or were said to have occurred, during the last week, there was not a symptom anywhere of the

works being carried on in a hurry. Everything seemed to go like clock-work. From El Ferdane, at the end of Lake Ballah, to Lake Timsah, a distance of about five miles, the Canal has had to be cut through the sand of the desert. The sand is so fine and shifting in this part—as it is everywhere, so far as I have seen, in the real desert —that you would have said beforehand that any trench cut through it would have fallen in at once. This has not proved to be the case. In the first place, the action of the water, as I have already explained, has given cohesion to the sand; in the second, the lower stratum of sand has been found to be far harder than the surface; and, in fact, the lower banks of the land look as if they had been cut through sandstone. This particular section was excavated mainly by spade labour; and at the height of the work nearly sixty thousand men were employed upon it, thirty-five thousand working by day and twenty-five thousand by night. The sand, as it was dug out, was carted away by a temporary railroad, portions of which may still be seen on the banks, and was thrown out into the desert, where it has raised up great ridges of sand. The banks, however, at this part are very steep, and the quantity of sand rubbed off by the wash of the steamboats is far greater than in places where the slope of the shore is

gradual. Moreover, the channel is very narrow and its course tortuous. It will be necessary to lower the slopes, to straighten the course, and to widen the channel.

In the days of the Pharaohs, I suppose, there was really a lake at Timsah; but till the other day it was a barren sandy hollow, with a few shallow pools of water, across which you could ride without the slightest risk or difficulty. Filled as it is now with the waters of the Mediterranean, it forms a pretty inland salt sea lake. On the northern shore stands the town of Ismailia. The Viceroy is building a very handsome stone palace upon the banks; the Governor, too, has a palace; there is a fine railway station, a large hotel, and a few villas occupied by the *employés* of the company; but the town as yet consists of only a few streets of low wooden houses, chiefly stores and cafés, and an infinity of shanties and huts. Till a very few years ago the desert stretched over the site of Ismailia, and not a living soul was to be seen except a stray Bedouin who chanced to pitch his tent there for the night. But since the construction of the Sweet Water Canal from the Nile to Lake Timsah, vegetation has sprung up on every side, and in the gardens of M. de Lesseps' villa you may see orange-trees and acacias tall enough to afford shelter from the noonday sun. At Lake

Timsah are to be the head-quarters of the land works, and the depôt of the company, while vessels passing up and down will cross each other in the waters of the lake. Altogether Ismailia is likely to turn out a very improving locality, and any speculative contractor who bought up building lots round about the shores of the lake would find, I think, that castles built upon sand are not always unremunerative.

Through Lake Timsah the course of the Canal is marked out by buoys; and through the greater part, if not the whole, a rough bed was cut out before the waters were let in. The Canal enters at the north-east corner, and, after sweeping round at a wide angle through the mere, leaves it at the south-east. From Timsah to the Bitter Lakes the Canal again passes for eight miles or so through the desert. But this portion was constructed at a later period than that from Timsah northwards; and the dredges were more used here than in the above-named section. The slopes are lower, the width greater; and the work, when finished, will be of a more satisfactory kind. The misfortune is that the work is still very far from being finished. The dredges are plied hard scooping out the bed; but this scooping ought to have been completed long ago, and the urgent necessity of setting the dredges in

motion without delay has led to the only serious mishap which has hitherto befallen the completion of the Canal. As soon as the channel had been cut through the sand to a certain depth, it was resolved to flood the reach, and thus allow the dredges to be brought into operation. Before the waters were let in the soil was probed; and it was decided, after a very hasty examination, that there was nothing in the bed which could not be raised by the dredging buckets. The water was admitted; the machines were set to work; and everything went on satisfactorily till one day last week, when the dredgers suddenly struck on something hard; and, on sounding, it was found that right in the middle of the channel there was a layer of rock, about eighty feet in length, lying at from twelve to fourteen feet beneath the surface of the water. Forthwith the dredging had to be stopped, in order that the sunken rock might be blown up with powder. In consequence, strict orders were issued that no boats, not on urgent business of the company, should be allowed to pass the landing-place of Serapeum, opposite to which the obstruction had been discovered. It was said that the object of this veto was to hinder the miners from being disturbed in their work; but I suspect the reluctance of the contractors to have people prying about the spot had a good deal more to do

with the prohibition. If the subordinate officials of Ismailia could have had their own way, we should certainly not have been permitted to go down to Serapeum. But M. de Lesseps' determination that our party should see everything overruled all objections, and we were taken up to the spot on board one of the small postal steamers. A large strong-built raft, supported on barges, was moored right over the sunken rock. From this raft men, armed with long iron poles, drilled holes in the stone. A charge of powder was lowered into the holes thus drilled, through a hollow cylinder, and the blasting powder was set alight by a wire connected with an electric battery. At the time I was present no explosion took place, so that I could not judge of the practical efficiency of this somewhat cumbrous process. But on the bank there were great masses of stone which had been torn away from the rock by the powder, and which were piled up, pending the arrival of the barge which was to carry them out to the Bitter Lakes. The stone was of a very soft, porous kind, which crumbled in your hands if you squeezed it hard.

Even, however, when the rock is cut away, there is a good deal of dredging still to be done in the Serapeum section. Luckily, the dredges will need to traverse no

long distance before they reach Lake Timsah, where they can be moored out of the way in safety. I don't think I have mentioned that one of the many pieces of work which have to be done before the opening is the removal of the steam dredges from the channel. These enormous flat-bottomed barges, with their huge cranes, wheels, and conduit pipes, can only be moved slowly. The bays with which the course of the Canal is dotted on the map, and in which vessels are to take refuge if any difficulty arise about passing ships going in a contrary direction, exist upon paper only; and the only place where the steam dredges, or for that matter any other craft, can now be safely moored out of harm's way, are at Port Saïd, in the docks at Suez, or at Lake Timsah. The latter place is to be the chief station for the dredges, and from its proximity to Serapeum the floating machines, which will be set to work as soon as the blasting is finished, to clear away the deposit, will have no great distance to traverse when their work is over. From the more distant sections of the Canal the dredges are already coming in, and, with the exception of a few which are anchored in places where the channel is unusually broad, the whole dredging fleet will be in harbour before the opening day.

From the top of the banks at Serapeum you look down upon a great expanse of water. The Bitter Lakes, in fact, lie almost at your feet. Our steam launch was not permitted to pass the point where the blasting was going on, so we had to make a détour, and continue our voyage through the canal in another steamer.

I do not suppose that the portion of the Canal through which you sail over the Bitter Lakes presented nearly so many difficulties of construction as the sections where a trench had to be cut through mud and sand drift. But it impresses you more than any other with the extraordinary magnitude of this gigantic enterprise. A few months ago the desert stretched over almost all the area now covered with water. At the bottom of the hollow, in which the mere is enclosed, there was a marsh of very brackish water from which the title of the Bitter Lakes has been taken. Now, in lieu of the desert, there is an inland sea twenty-five miles in length and six to seven miles in breadth at its broadest point, which has been created by tapping the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Many will remember that the feasibility or non-feasibility of constructing this inland sea was one of the points most vigorously contested; but all the potent arguments by which it was shown that the Bitter Lakes could not

exist, are refuted by the plain fact that they do exist. The only difficulty experienced in filling the basin arose from the rapidity with which the water poured in. The basin was first filled with water from the Mediterranean up to the level of low water at Suez, and then the Red Sea was let in. With a view to breaking the flow of the tide which came rushing in, a dam of uncut sandstone had been left across the Canal, near the southern mouth of the lake, and the water of the Red Sea was conducted round this dam by trenches, and allowed to trickle slowly down the sloping shores into the lake. Some time, however, before the flood had reached its level, the dam gave way, and the tide swept in with a resistless current. The barges and dredges in the Canal below the lake were all carried away from their moorings; and the work of dredging had to be stopped for a week, till the damage done to the dredges could be repaired. Since the two seas have joined their waters, a strong current has set in from south to north, but of any eddy or fall at the meeting of the waters there is now no trace. The tide runs up the Canal from Suez with great force, there being a difference of six to seven feet between high and low water; but it is lost in the Bitter Lakes. The colour of the current is green, unlike that of the portion of the Canal fed by the

Mediterranean, which is blue. Since the lakes have been filled, there has been a fall of five degrees Centigrade in the mean temperature of the district round its banks. One odd fact told me is that, though the Canal literally swarms with sea fish, the fish of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea keep to their own ends of the channel. About the northern end of the Bitter Lakes the water is so extremely salt that apparently the fish decline to pass through it. The bed of the Bitter Lakes is the only portion of the Canal's course in which it has not been necessary to make a cutting. The track to be sailed over is marked out with buoys; but, in the major portion of the lake, it is held that vessels may sail wide of the course thus indicated without danger of running aground. How this may be I have no means of judging; our steamer darted to and fro about the lake without paying the smallest attention to the buoys, but then she drew only four to five feet of water. If a vessel should get aground in the lakes, the difficulty of getting her off will be greater than in the Canal, where posts are put up at short intervals along the banks, to which ropes can be fastened to warp round any ship which gets into trouble.

After the long, weary journey through sixty miles of

sand cutting, where the blazing heat of the sun is intensified by the glare and glitter of the sand, it is a great relief to sail out upon the broad, open waters of the Bitter Lakes, with the grand expanse of the desert stretching away across the shores, right up to the foot of the high, rocky hills which enclose the northern end of the Red Sea. On quitting the lakes you re-enter the Canal. The first ten miles from the mouth towards Suez appear to me the most thoroughly completed of the whole distance. There was not a dredge to be seen; the villages of wooden huts, of which there are such numbers on the banks, run up for the workmen were completely deserted. The labourers had been paid off, and the work was held to be done. The case was very different in the last section of the Canal across the lagoons of Suez. In a distance of about a mile, I counted seventeen dredging machines in full work; the course for ships, traced by flags stuck in the middle of the Canal, is narrower than I had ever noticed it before.

The Canal widens considerably as you approach the sea. The piers at the mouth had to be carried out much farther into the water than had been expected, but at present the channel leading from the Canal into the Red Sea is as good as could be wished, and there is no indication of

any bars being formed at the mouth. After quitting the Canal, you cross the neck of the Red Sea to reach the great docks which the company have erected on the western coast. The Cairo and Alexandria railroad has been prolonged for a distance of two miles, and is carried through the sea on an embankment which lands the trains close to the docks and quays of the Canal. The line is absolutely finished, but is not yet used. As soon as it is open, passengers by the Overland route will be able to embark from the train on board the steamer in the same way as you do at Dover, and will thus avoid the troublesome transshipment of themselves and their luggage by means of boats and tenders. I cannot but fear that, with the opening of this extended line, the glory of Shepherd's Hotel will depart from it, and that the place of that world-known caravanserai will be taken by some hotel situated nearer to the landing-place.

During my progress through the Canal from Port Saïd to Suez, I had the advantage of making the expedition with two English officers who had considerable experience in engineering works, and their opinion coincided with my own as to the fact that the *ultimate* success of the undertaking was now assured. It has been shown by actual working that the waters of the Red Sea will flow

into the Mediterranean; that a canal can be formed which will hold water; and that there is no accumulation of sand which cannot easily be removed by dredging. Given these conclusions, it is clear that the Canal can be and will be made. Whether it is actually made now is a matter on which I cannot speak with certainty, and till the test of practical working has been applied, it is impossible to say more than that the company are acting as if they credited their own assertions.

THE OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL.

ON BOARD THE FAYOUM, PORT SAÏD, *Nov.* 16.

EARLY this morning I was leaning over the gunwale of the *Fayoum*, peering out into the labyrinth of ships with which the harbour of Port Saïd is crowded, when I espied, shooting out from under the bows of the *Massourah*, the Viceroy's yacht, a boat in which a man sat stooping. As the boat glided by, the solitary passenger looked up, and I recognised the face of the man by whom this port, this vast concourse of vessels, this gathering of crowned heads, this great enterprise had been called into existence—the face of Ferdinand de Lesseps. He looked very worn, tired, and haggard. Last evening I had seen him presiding at a dinner given to the representatives of the Chambers of Commerce; and all through the night he had been hard at work. For him, surely, to-day must seem wearily, drearily long. To-morrow is to be his Waterloo; to-morrow is to decide whether the enterprise to which his life has been devoted will prove a colossal

success or a gigantic failure. It is true, as I have written often before now, that the passage or non-passage of the inaugural flotilla across the Isthmus will not absolutely determine the issue whether the Canal is or is not an accomplished triumph. But the personal reputation of Lesseps is staked upon the outturn of to-morrow. He has summoned the world to witness the end of a mighty achievement; the summons has been accepted; and even a man as daring, as sanguine, as confident of success as the creator of the Suez Canal, may well feel anxious, if not discouraged, during the last few hours that precede the drawing of the lottery in which so great a venture has been embarked.

Something of that same feeling of trepidation must, I think, be felt by all who are spectators of this strange duel between the engineering energies of man and the forces of nature. At the gambling tables of Germany, when a gamester is playing high against the bank, the deal of the cards is watched with a feverish anxiety by lookers-on who neither lose nor win a sixpence whether it is *rouge* or *couleur* which is called out as the last card is turned. So it is with me; and writing, as I do now, within a few hours of the final determination of the problem whose solution has so long occupied the thoughts

of the world, I do not feel inclined to indulge in calm speculation as to the chances in favour of or against success. Sufficient for the day is the news thereof; and, for the present, I shall content myself with recording the gathering of the personages who are to take part in to-morrow's pageant—the prelude to the drama upon which the curtain is to rise with the coming daybreak.

Yesterday was to be the first trysting day at Suez; and on Sunday evening, just as the sun set, the good ship *Fayoum* sailed out of Alexandria harbour, having on board some hundred of the Viceroy's guests. I hear no lack of complaints as to the mismanagement and want of organization which have characterised the conduct of the various arrangements for the accommodation of the invited. *If* the stories I hear be true, these complaints are not altogether ill-founded; but, so far as I am concerned, I have no grievance of my own to allege. As an old traveller, I have learnt that, if you take things quietly, you are pretty sure to fall upon your legs; and so far I have had no ground to repent of my conviction, that the managers of the enterprise are more likely to know what arrangements are most suitable for their guests than are the guests themselves. The *Fayoum*, a splendid paddle-steamer, of 2,000 tons, in which the Viceroy's harem used

to be transported every summer to the Bosphorus, in the days when goodwill reigned between the Khediveh and his suzerain, had been set apart for the transport of persons who, like myself, had received invitations from the Egyptian Foreign Office; and, though numbers of my fellow-guests were convinced that they would gain some unknown advantage by getting passage on other boats, I resolved to stick to the *Fayoum;* and I found my reward in so doing. It was blowing great guns as we lay in the port of Alexandria; the departure of the *Aigle*, the Empress's yacht, was delayed till the Monday, and the *Fayoum* was the only one of the Government vessels which put out to sea. The miseries of a rough passage are the same everywhere; and it was a glad sight for all the passengers on the *Fayoum* when the day broke, and we discovered the low, sandy coast of Africa rising above the outer line of the watery horizon. As is universally the case with all vessels manned by Arab crews, our captain was at sea, metaphorically as well as literally; and we made Damietta in lieu of Port Saïd. At last, however, the twin lighthouses which mark the entrance to the new port of the Mediterranean rose into sight, and behind them we descried a perfect forest of masts. We reached the harbour in about eighteen hours from our

departure from Alexandria, and entered—our vessel drawing sixteen feet—without difficulty. Scarcely, however, were we in smooth water behind the breakwater, when we were ordered out again by the harbour-master's boat, through some unintelligible mistake, and were kept pitching and rolling in the roadstead for another hour, when at last we received the welcome signal to make for the port. About half a mile to the east of the pier the British ironclad squadron lay at anchor. Why they had taken up that particular position, or why they had not entered the harbour, were questions on which the English passengers speculated much, as we sailed under the grand black walls of the *Bellerophon*, the *Prince Consort*, the *Lord Warden*, and the *Caledonian*. As soon as we could communicate with the shore the puzzle was explained, though not altogether satisfactory. Since our ironclads drew twenty-eight feet, they could not cross the bar at the mouth of Port Saïd, and the intention was that they should cruise about in the offing. Unfortunately, two of the four men-of-war stuck upon a sandbank. According to the current reports here, the fleet steamed up to the roadstead without a pilot, and ran aground upon a shoal which has been caused by the discharge of the dredgings from the harbour, and is not yet marked upon the charts.

The occurrence is annoying, as, with men-of-war of all nations crowding the harbour and roads, the British fleet moored out at sea, and with half its squadron stranded on a sandbank, occupies a somewhat ludicrous position. However, as it was not ever intended to have the Royal flag of England represented in the flotilla of men-of-war which is to sail up the Canal, the mishap is of less importance.

From the extremity of the piers, which have been run out into the sea to form the harbour, to the mouth of the Canal, is a full mile and a half, and for the last two-thirds of this distance the *Fayoum* steamed slowly through a double row of men-of-war and transport vessels. Whatever may be the defects of Port Saïd as a harbour, it is shown that it can afford safe anchorage for some hundred vessels, varying from between five hundred to two thousand five hundred tons in burthen. These ships were moored at right angles to the piers, with their sterns close to the shore. It is worthy of note, also, that almost all these vessels made good their entrance during one of the stiffest gales you can well encounter in the waters of the Mediterranean. There were ships of every nation—Swedish, Dutch, Belgian, Italian, Greek, Spanish, French, Russian, English, and American; and, though the Union Jack was everywhere to the fore, the one flag conspicuous by its absence was

the Royal Standard of Great Britain. As we entered the port, the ships were all dressed with flags, the yards were manned, and the waters were covered with the white puffs of cannon-smoke. Even our Arab crew fired off one gun with great fuss and bustle, in order, as the captain informed us in his quaint, broken English, to be "much polite." Just before our arrival, the Emperor of Austria had arrived at Port Saïd on board the Imperial yacht. The Crown Prince of Sweden, the Prince Royal of Holland, had already put in their appearance. On our first arrival we took up our station next to the Viceroy's steam yacht, the *Massourah*. According to the original programme, the Royal guests are all to sail together in the *Massourah* through the Canal, in order to do away with all difficulties as to precedence. It is reported, however, to-day, that the length of the *Massourah* has been found an objection, and that the Viceroy and his guests are to go in a smaller steamer, the *Latif*. However this may be, it would be difficult to find a grander vessel to carry a shipload of Royalty than this magnificent steam yacht, which was built for the Khediveh by Messrs. Samuda.

As we took up our station, the Emperor of Austria was returning the visit which the Viceroy had paid him upon his arrival. It was a gay scene enough. The water was

crowded with men-of-war's gigs plying to and fro; and amidst this flotilla of boats, Arab dhows, laden with troops of Bedouins, in all the gorgeous hues of Eastern attire, sailed up and down. The Viceroy and the Emperor stood upon the midship deck, looking out upon the harbour, and after a few minutes' conversation they lit cigarettes. Then the Imperial anthem was played by the Viceregal band, and Francis Joseph took his departure amidst the cheers of the sailors who manned the yards of the various men-of-war. After the interview with the Emperor, the Khediveh received the visit of Lord Alfred Paget and some other English gentlemen, who have come out in the *Principe Tomaso*, a steamer which had been placed at their disposal by the Adriatic-Oriental Company. There was luncheon on board for all who called to pay their respects to the Viceroy; and the band played various national airs during the forenoon, "God save the Queen" and "Partant pour la Syrie" being those most in favour. The evening passed over without any incident of interest, the only event of the night being a ball on board the *Massourah*, at which the Emperor of Austria was not present.

This morning we were waked early by the sound of cannon; and all day long our ears have been deafened

with the roar of guns fired from every ship around us, till the very teeth in one's head rattled with the jar and clatter. It was the arrival of the Empress of the French which gave the first signal for this avalanche of noise. The *Aigle* had sailed from Alexandria at noon yesterday, and, being a very swift sailer, her coming had been expected at a much earlier hour than that at which she appeared in the offing. It was close upon eight o'clock before the black hull of the yacht, with its yellow beading, its taper masts, and its bee-bespangled flags, entered the harbour. The British fleet, which was now once more afloat, was the first to welcome her Majesty. Then as the *Aigle* glided on, ship after ship responded to the challenge; and, amid guns firing, flags waving, men cheering, the *Aigle* took up its position on the larboard of the *Massourah*, the Emperor of Austria's yacht occupying a like position on the starboard. The Empress stood upon the hurricane deck, and bowed repeatedly in response to the cheers with which she was greeted.

Throughout the morning salutes were fired, as visits and return visits were paid from one royal personage to another; and it seemed to me that the seamen on the various ships-of-war must have passed at least two hours out of three upon the yards. At three the religious func-

tion took place which was to inaugurate the opening of the Suez Canal. Upon the shore to the west of the harbour three kiosks had been erected for the ceremonial. The centre lodge nearest the end was reserved for the Khediveh and his royal guests; the one to his right was set apart for the Mussulman Mollahs; the one to his left for the priests of the various Christian persuasions. It had been intended that the priests of all faiths should offer up their prayers together; but this plan, intended to unite the ministers of religion in one common act of worship, had to be abandoned as impracticable. The kiosks, unlike the gorgeous structure which the Sultan erected at Beykos as a resting-place for the Empress while the Turkish troops marched past, were almost bare in their decorations. Within a few minutes of the appointed time the royal personages took up their stations in the centre kiosk, and seated themselves on arm-chairs turned towards the Mediterranean. The front row of eight seats was occupied in the following fashion:—On the extreme left, looking seawards, sat Prince Louis of Hesse, next to him the Prince Oscar of Sweden, then the Crown Prince of Prussia, the Emperor of Austria, the Empress of the French, the Khediveh, the Princess of the Netherlands, and in the right-hand corner Mr. Elliot, as

representative of England. Prince Frederick William was dressed in the Prussian uniform, and wore the Grand Cordon of the Osmanlieh; as also did the Emperor, who had on, as usual, his white Austrian Jäger uniform, with the cocked hat surmounted by the plume of green feathers. The Empress looked handsomer, I think, than I have ever seen her—and that is saying a great deal. Her dress was of mauve silk, covered with deep flounces of white lace; and though I had the good fortune to stand very near her, I should never have dreamt, had I not known to the contrary, of describing her as having passed the age of the *femme de trente ans* which Balzac held to be the apogee of female loveliness. The Viceroy had the Medjidieh and the Cordon of the Legion of Honour fastened over his Turkish uniform, and looked tired, and, if I may speak the truth, sleepy. Behind the front row of royalists were any number of princes, diplomatists, ladies-in-waiting, equerries, and courtiers. Amidst the crowd of uniforms, the plain black coat of M. de Lesseps and the white Arab bournous of Abd-el-Kader stood out strangely conspicuous, not so much from their contrast with the gilt and braid around them, as from the marked individuality of their wearers.

On either side the royal kiosk were side lodges, filled

with any number of black-robed Armenian and Coptic priests; and between the centre kiosk and the smaller ones, where the religious ceremony was to be performed, was a motley crowd of all nations, the only nationality not represented being that of the natives of the soil. The proceedings commenced with a prayer or address read in a low voice, from a written paper, by a Mollah with a green turban, accompanied by half-a-dozen aged sheikhs, who, like their spokesman, seemed ill at ease. Of the foreigners who crowded round the royal stand, not half-a-dozen probably understood one word of what the Mollah was reading; and the loud conversation they kept up during the recital of the Mussulman prayer was excused by the fact that the Khediveh chatted with the Empress during the whole time of its delivery. When the Mollah had concluded, a score or more of Greek priests, in gorgeous robes, entered the right-hand kiosk, where an altar had been raised up, with a cross—not a crucifix—in front, and rows of wax candles, and commenced a long sing-song chant, varied by endless genuflexions, crossings, and bowings, the chief part of the service being performed by a venerable-looking, grey-haired old man, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Then the ships in the harbour fired off rounds upon rounds of salutes; and when at last the firing was ended, Mon-

signor Bauer, the chaplain of the French Imperial Court, stepped forward on the platform as the representative of the Catholic Church. A young, fresh-looking ecclesiastic, with the purple cape and beret of a Pontifical Prothonotary, he scarcely looked equal to the duty which had been assigned to him of being the real spokesman of the ministers of religion. But when his clear, rich voice was once heard ringing forth distinctly and slowly across the shore, no doubt could be entertained as to the wisdom of the choice which had assigned to him the leading part in the ceremonial. This, so far as I can recall, was the brief outline of Monsignor's speech: "The solemn hour has come. On this wonderful shore, beneath this marvellous sky, we are met to celebrate the accomplishment of a world's marvel. At last there is accomplished this great undertaking of all nations. An era is marked in the history of mankind. From the farthest portions of the globe we are gathered to celebrate this epoch of time. The glorious East, the wondrous West, salute each other. This is a holy day of humanity. A horizon more vast than all known horizons opens out before us. It is, no doubt, the material grandeur of this undertaking which first impresses the spectator; but its material grandeur is as nothing compared with its moral greatness. The

ideas, the manners, the morals, the language, the faiths of two continents will henceforward mingle together across this channel which unites two seas. You men of all races gathered together here symbolize by your presence the future brotherhood of mankind. It is a giant's task you have come to celebrate. All honour then to the conquerors in this glorious battle of peace which to-day has been fought and won. *The Canal is a success, an accomplished fact.*" The speaker then paid compliments to the Khediveh, saying that East and West saluted Ismail Pacha as the regenerator of Egypt; to the Empress of the French for the noble sympathy she had shown throughout the enterprise; to the Emperor Francis Joseph for the encouragement he had given by the act of his presence. He then made an apostrophe to Lesseps, as the Columbus of our own time and as the personification of French enterprise, courage, and genius, a passage which called forth a ringing cheer; and he concluded with a hope that this great enterprise, which was destined to cement so many material interests, would raise the minds of all who witnessed its completion to the thought of a federation of mankind on earth, to that yet higher and wider brotherhood which awaits them in the world to come.

The address was somewhat lengthy—a little magniloquent, perhaps—but yet it was not unequal to the greatness of the occasion, and the applause with which it was greeted at its close was not of a merely formal character. Then the Greek popes sung a sacred chant, the cannon thundered forth again from the sea, and the ceremony was over. The royal party walked down from the kiosk to the quay, preceded by a procession of the workmen of the Canal, bearing flags. The Emperor of Austria led the way, giving his arm to the Empress of the French; the Viceroy followed, with the Princess Royal of Holland on his left, and Abd-el-Kader on his right; and the other princes and potentates came behind, mixed up together. There was no attempt at any special pomp or show. In the evening the ships in the harbour were illuminated; there was a display of fireworks of no particular brilliancy; and to-night the one thought in everybody's mind is, What will the morrow bring forth? Were Monsignor Bauer's bold declarations of success a mere rhetorical artifice, or are they the harbingers of a real triumph? To-morrow will tell.

FROM PORT SAÏD TO ISMAILIA.

ISMAILIA, *November* 17.

As I write, the telegraphic wires are carrying to Compiègne a message which will take precedence of all other communications. The message is addressed by the Empress of the French to the Prince Imperial, bidding him, on receipt of the telegram, to write himself and congratulate M. de Lesseps on the success of his great work. It is not often that Royal messages may be accepted with such entire good faith as the one which tells the tidings of to-day's achievement. No matter what difficulties may arise in the further prosecution of the journey from sea to sea, the Canal, as an engineering work, is an accomplished success. The problem of piercing the Isthmus has been solved. For the first time in the world's annals, vessels of large burthen, sailing from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, have crossed each other's path in the midst of the Desert; and even if the Canal should utterly fail as a commercial undertaking, the name of Ferdinand de Lesseps

will be remembered in history as the author of one of the world's wonders—as the founder and creator of the Suez Canal. In the presence of so grand an achievement of human energy, an achievement so full of promise for the interests of our race, a man must have a very narrow nature who could avoid sharing in some measure in the exultation with which this brilliant success has been received by all persons interested in the undertaking. I own also, cordially, that I derive something of a personal sense of satisfaction from the fact, that the issue of the enterprise has been such as I predicted in these letters. That the opening of the Canal was sure to be a complete and utter fiasco was the assured conviction of all the British residents, and of all the engineering authorities among the crowd of visitors with whom I have had the fortune to come into contact. It required a certain amount of resolution to oppose the opinion of an unprofessional observer like myself to that of numbers of men who had far greater practical knowledge both of the country and of the mechanical conditions of the problem. I claim no credit for superior acuteness. The one ground of my belief was the simple conviction that the men who had charge of the work were not likely to pledge their words to misstatements whose falseness, if they were false, must neces-

sarily be exposed in a very few days by the evidence of fact, and this belief has so far served me in good stead. But it was hard at times not to swerve from my faith; hardest of all during the hours which immediately preceded its justification.

Last night I received an invitation from Nubar Pacha to accompany him upon the *Mohammed Ali*, an Egyptian steam frigate, which, according to the latest arrangements, was to lead the way in the progress through the Canal. All through the evening Port Saïd was full of unfavourable rumours. Something had gone wrong; there was a hitch somewhere; the Empress was about to return straight to France; the opening was to be put off; and so on. It was impossible to trace any of these reports to a trustworthy source, yet the unanimity with which they foreboded evil was a sure sign that things were not going well. There was little sleep last night in Port Saïd. Midnight had long passed before the lights were put out on board the men-of-war, steamers, and yachts with which the harbour was crowded; and the first faint grey streaks of dawn had not yet shown themselves in the east before the lights were lit again. Everybody was on foot betimes. Sleep was impossible while steam whistles were shrieking, bugles blowing the *réveillé*, chains clanking, boatswains

piping up their crews, engines snorting, anchors heaving, and drums beating. Even in Egypt the early mornings are grey, cold, and cheerless, and everything looked dismal enough as we rowed across the harbour through the vast fleet of ships, whose monster hulls and taper masts loomed phantom-like through the dim gloaming. When we reached the *Mohammed Ali*, it was obvious that there was a screw loose somewhere. Great preparations had been made for the entertainment of the guests who had been invited to sail on board the pioneer ship; numbers of servants had been draughted off from the other vessels to wait upon the company; great piles of champagne cases, luncheon hampers, sardine boxes, and blocks of ice were stored upon the deck. The ship was in gala costume, but nobody knew what the arrangements were to be—the anchor was down. Nubar Pacha, the most courteous of men, was not on board to receive his guests, and there were no signs of starting. We were ordered to be on board before six at the very latest; but the morning stole on, the mist vanished before the sun, and still we lay at anchor; and though every vessel in the harbour had its steam up, they all lay still and motionless. Men-of-war's boats were shooting from ship to ship. Salutes were fired at intervals, as one Royal personage after another passed

along the harbour in search of the craft that was to convey him through the Canal. No information could be gathered from any person in authority, except that no orders had been received; and the minutes went by, and still Nubar Pacha failed to make his appearance. At last, some time after seven, two small steam launches, and a tug boat about half the size of a Thames steamer, moored themselves alongside the *Mohammed Ali*. The Minister of Foreign Affairs jumped on board from one of them, apologized for having kept us waiting, and then told us, without the slightest attempt to conceal his disappointment, that an Egyptian Government steamer, the *Latif*, had stuck fast in going up the Canal, while trying to pass the night before; that it was impossible for the *Mohammed Ali* or any large vessel to get by the stranded ship, but he had got the steam launches ready to take us on our journey. Of course, where it was impossible for us to pass, the large ships which were to convey the Royal visitors must also be stopped. The Canal would have to be opened by a procession of boats; the whole affair, as it seemed, was destined to be a complete, almost a ludicrous, fiasco. However, there was nothing to be done, except to put a good face on a bad business. It was high time that we should be off. Passengers, luggage, and refreshments were

bundled, as fast as might be, from the *Mohammed Ali* into the launches, his Excellency Nubar Pacha and M. Guichard, the chief engineer of the Canal, working as porters themselves to stir up the Egyptian servants to something like activity, and the passengers giving such help as lay in their power. The attempt, however, to treat the matter as a good joke was not much of a success. Our merriment was very hollow, and our entertainers were too much down in the mouth at the mishap, which, as we thought then, had marred the whole affair, to pretend even that they treated the matter lightly. In reply to some question as to the way in which the accident had occurred, a very high Egyptian official on board the *Mohammed Ali* shrugged his shoulders with the remark, "My dear sir, this is how we always do manage matters in this country;" and there was no more to be said, except to repeat the commonplace, that things always mend when they are at their worst.

There was no possibility of disguising the magnitude of the apprehended disaster, had there been any wish to do so, as even the score or so of trunks which the guests had brought with them had to be carefully allotted amidst the launches and the tugs, for fear any of the craft should draw too much water to get round the obstruction in the

Canal. Of course there was not wanting amongst us the class of Job's comforters, who had known all along that something of this kind must happen; and even friends of the enterprise loudly expressed their irritation at the supposed obstinacy of M. de Lesseps, who had positively refused to defer the opening till the Canal had been actually traversed by some vessel of large burthen. It was said—with what truth I know not—that the Viceroy had got so nervous at the possibility of the Royal fleet's running aground in the Canal, that he had insisted on the *Latif's* being sent up on a trial trip at the last hour. However this might be, the one thing we knew for certain was, that the first vessel of any size which had tried to pass through, had stuck fast in the middle of the Canal fourteen miles after starting, and that of itself was enough to justify the worst apprehensions of failure.

Swiftly and silently our little flotilla of steam-launches stole out of the harbour, as if we were ashamed—as, I think, most of us were—at being the forerunners of a fleet of boats, and proceeded up the long straight reach which leads from Port Saïd to Kantara. In the hurry of our departure, we had come away without knives and forks, or glasses, while others had neither wine nor victuals, and there was a little feeble merriment as we drew up along-

side each other, and tossed what we wanted in turn across the water; Nubar Pacha's launch and other boats terminating the exchange by a brisk fire of apples and sugar-plums from board to board. Breakfast occupied a certain time not unpleasantly, but when we had done that, there was nothing to do and very little to be seen. Conversation fell flat; to most of us this section of the Canal was wearily familiar, and even had it not been so, a sail through high sandbanks, over which you cannot see anything except the glaring cloudless sky, is not in itself inspiriting. So we sat, smoked, dozed, and speculated idly upon the chances that the opening might be deferred, and that our advance fleet would not be followed by the Royal visitors.

About ten miles beyond Port Saïd we espied the high masts of the *Latif* rising in the distance. Then her hull appeared, and, as we saw that she was right in the centre of the stream, our worst apprehensions seemed fulfilled. If she had only struck upon the banks it would have been bad enough, but here, as it looked, she had run aground in mid-stream, in the very deepest and most ample portion of the whole Canal. After a time, however, we noticed with surprise that the hull, instead of becoming more distinct, grew, if anything, fainter in outline, and at last

the sanguine members of our small expedition entertained a surmise that the *Latif* was moving. The idea was at first scouted by the majority of the company, but gradually it gained adherents, and ere long we saw a small steamboat coming rapidly towards us at full speed with flags flying. "The *Latif* is off!" was shouted to us in English from the paddle-box of the steamer as we shot past her, and before we had finished our answering cheer, the steamer was far away, carrying the news down the stream. A short time afterwards we came up with a white steamer, as large perhaps as a Gravesend packet, moored alongside the bank, from which it was just being pushed off by poles. On deck was the Viceroy, whose face was beaming with satisfaction, and who bowed and waved his hand as we passed, cheering lustily. His Highness had left Port Saïd early in the morning, to see if anything could be done to remedy the disaster, and was now about to pursue his journey on to Ismailia, the *Latif* being fairly afloat, and the tug which had pulled her off having now left her to pursue her way. It seems that in her voyage up-stream the *Latif* had run foul of a barge, and that, having to swerve out of the course, her double screw twisted her right across the channel, and her bows got embedded in the sand.

The encouragement, however, which our spirits had received by the clearing of the passage was not destined to be very long-lived. When we reached Kantara, where the one bay yet finished or even begun upon the Canal is situated, we found that the *Latif* had not been allowed to continue her voyage, but was safely moored alongside the bank. The inference naturally drawn from this fact was that it was not deemed safe for her to pursue her voyage; and, as the *Latif* is of far smaller burthen and draught than the *Aigle*, or any of the vessels on which the Royal guests were to be conveyed, we could only jump to the conclusion that the idea of a ship procession had been abandoned, as being too dangerous to be risked, and that the progress through the Canal, if made at all, would be made in boats. So we went on in not much better spirits than before. The utter desolation of the Canal was in itself depressing. For miles upon miles we saw no living creature, except a fellah fishing in the stream, or a Bedouin riding on a camel along the heights of the sandbanks. At the "Gares," the stations for taking in water, where there are generally a few workmen's huts, and a water-side tavern—stations which occur at fixed intervals of ten kilomètres—were gathered little groups of people, mostly European workmen and their wives.

Flags had been hung up, and everybody was in his brightest attire; but it was reported along the Canal that the inaugural procession had had to be virtually abandoned, and the sense of failure depressed even the most indifferent of the spectators. When I last passed through the Canal, barely a week ago, the dredging machines were at full work; and there was visible all the life and activity inseparable from the prosecution of any great undertaking in which thousands of workmen are employed. But now all was changed. But very few of the dredges were left; the boats, barges, and steam tugs had disappeared; on the half-dozen dredges still left moored along the banks the works had stopped, the wheels were still, the very engine fires were out. At noon to-day the contract for dredging the bottom of the canal came to a close; and the workmen, still clustering upon the dredges in their working clothes, remained there only to see the show of the opening. The job was ended, and yet, as we fancied then, by a strange irony of fate, on the very day on which the Canal was reckoned so certain of completion that the workmen had received notice to leave weeks beforehand, it was found that no vessel larger than a steam wherry could make its way through the channel.

It was only as we entered the winding channel which debouches on Lake Timsah from the north that the prospect began to brighten. The promontories of which I spoke last week had been cut down, and the water flowed over the ground thus added to the Canal, so that an appearance of considerable width had been given to the narrow channel. Crowds of gaily-dressed ladies, and of Arabs, whose garments were of yet brighter hues, sat upon the slopes of the sandbanks; mounted horsemen galloped about, conspicuous amongst whom I noticed Monsignor Bauer, the orator of yesterday's ceremony. Triumphal arches had been raised; wreaths of leaves and flowers had been worked into mottoes—"Vive l'Impératrice," "A l'Union de l'Occident et de l'Orient," and so forth. As we passed under the banks black with people, we were saluted with cries that the Empress had started in the *Aigle*, and we retorted with shouts that the *Latif* was afloat. But still, I confess, we did not feel very confident about the truth of the intelligence; and, even admitting its truth, it was still, as we thought, more than doubtful whether, if the *Latif* could not proceed beyond Kantara, the *Aigle* would be able to reach Lake Timsah. The lake was covered over with a flotilla of "dahabiahs," as the Nile boats are called, steam launches,

and other Lilliputian craft, all decked out with flags, all filled with gaily-dressed holiday folk. Troops were stationed on the brow of the low sand-hills; the shores were covered with endless rows of white tents; the water's edge was fringed round with double lines of lookers-on. Still the mere presence of this great gala multitude had little bearing upon the issue, whether the ship procession was really coming through the Canal; and the Egyptian officials by whom our expedition was accompanied seemed disposed to place little faith in the alleged telegrams, which were reported to declare that the Empress had already passed Kantara in the *Aigle*.

From early morning the crowd had been waiting for the coming of the Empress, and still, though the afternoon was fast waning, not a puff of smoke could be discerned in the direction of Port Saïd. There was little chance that the *Fayoum*, the vessel on which my luggage was placed, would arrive that night; and my first care was to secure a lodging. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been a hopeless endeavour to seek board and shelter in a little town of perhaps ten thousand souls, which had just received an influx of twenty to thirty thousand visitors. But the thoughtful hospitality of the Viceroy had proved equal to the emergency; and though no prepara-

tion had been made for the visitors who came through the Canal, as the intention was that they should sleep on board their respective vessels, I had a tent, with bedding, provided for me, where in this warm climate any one at all used to roughing it could spend the night, not only comfortably, but luxuriously. It would be ungrateful if I did not say a word here in acknowledgment of the excellence of the commissariat arrangements. A number of large wooden sheds have been run up, in which open table is kept for all persons who choose to avail themselves of the opportunity. In the shed in which I dined there were places for at least five hundred guests. No questions were asked; no tickets were demanded. You had only to enter in, and you were served with a dinner of many courses, far better than any you would get at most *tables d'hôtes* upon the Continent. Wines of various kinds, and all drinkable, were furnished *à discrétion;* coffee, cigars, and liqueurs were served after the meal; and the waiters not only did not ask for, but refused to accept any remuneration. These public restaurants, with their two meals a day, are to be kept open during the three days of the fêtes, and I regret that the hospitality of the Viceroy should have been taken advantage of by hundreds of persons, including no small number of my fellow-

countrymen, who had no more right or claim to regard themselves as the Khediveh's guests than I have to look upon myself as entitled to live at the expense of the Queen of England.

By the time I had got my billet and had found my quarters, it was getting towards evening, and the sun was very low in the west. When I got down to the coast of the lake, where the crowd had grown denser and closer ever since I passed through it a couple of hours before, already the tide of public feeling had turned, and strangers were beginning to congratulate each other on the success of the Canal. The reasons of this change in popular feeling were manifest enough. At the Suez mouth of the Canal, leading into the lake, there lay two steamers of the Messageries Impériales, which had come up straight from the Red Sea; and across the desert by El Guisr to the north, you could see, through a dark mass of smoke, the tall masts of a vessel rising above the sand-hills. From hillock to hillock, from group to group, the tidings had passed along that the masts belonged to the *Aigle*, and that the Empress of the French was on board. No scepticism and no despondency could stand proof against the testimony of those taper masts which now with the naked eye you could watch moving slowly across the

sand horizon. The multitude so downcast an hour or two before by the anticipation of failure, was now elated by the consciousness of success. Amongst the crowd there were few who had not some personal interest in the triumph of the enterprise whose final accomplishment had arrived, after so many years of delay and difficulty, and hope deferred. Men shook hands with each other without cause or previous knowledge; cheers were raised from time to time, and taken up heartily; people laughed, cried, and shouted by turns; and in many faces and many voices you could catch the symptoms of an excitement not far removed from an hysterical passion. Surely, since the days when the Ten Thousand caught sight of the sea at last, and shouted "Thalatta, Thalatta!" there can have been few emotions more vivid than those of the multitude on the shores of Lake Timsah as the masts of the *Aigle* rose clearer and clearer out of the pall of smoke.

On she came, winding slowly and surely through the turns of the Canal; and when at last her hull came fully into view as she glided into the broad waters of the lake, there was one loud, deafening cheer, which was drowned almost before it was begun by the roar of cannon. From the batteries on the banks, the bang

of the heavy guns came booming across the water; the sharp, quick rattle of platoon-firing followed, and the troops shouted with the hoarse, brief, Egyptian cry as the first sea-going vessel which had ever crossed the Isthmus steamed into the inland lake, having on board the Empress of the French, the wife of the Sovereign who, through ill and good report, has been staunch in his support of the enterprise which now stood tested, proved, and accomplished. The last rays of the setting sun shone brightly on the low sand-hills which surround the lake, upon the masts, upon the groups of spectators clustered like ants on the bare black slopes, upon the still blue waters, upon the flags which the *Aigle* flaunted forth, upon the wide expanse of the desert stretching away into the far distance; and as the *Aigle* came on, the two French steamers that had come up from Suez passed out of the cutting, under which they lay moored, into the lake. Then scarcely had the *Aigle* got clear of the straits ere she was followed by the *Gräf*, bearing at its mainmast the yellow standard of the House of Hapsburg. There was a pause before any other ship hove into sight; and meanwhile the night had come on, and the crowd, seeing that the Empress was not about to land, dispersed hastily. Of the thousand lights that twinkled forth as the dusk set in,

of the vast labyrinth of lights crowded with dusky figures in every variety of garb, of the fireworks, of the fair—the strange, wild gathering of many nations—and of the evening which followed the entry, I have no time to write. It is late; and yet from my hut I can hear the sounds of music and dancing in the Arab encampment; the rockets are still soaring at intervals into the sky, lighting up the darkness with a passing gleam and flash. But to-night I can record nothing beyond the one great fact, that the Canal is a success and a reality.

FROM ISMAILIA TO SUEZ.

SUEZ, *November* 21.

FROM the hour when the *Aigle* was met by the Messageries Impériales Steamers from Suez in the waters of Lake Timsah, the problem of the Isthmus Canal was solved. It is true that till to-day no vessel of larger burthen than a mere steam launch had ever sailed from sea to sea; but still, when once Lake Timsah had been entered at one and the same time by large ships hailing from Port Saïd and from Suez, the enterprise to which M. de Lesseps has devoted his life was achieved. This conclusion was so manifest, that after the evening of the 17th the Canal was considered to be opened; and official as well as private congratulations were tendered to the author of the scheme as if the traversing of the Canal were already an accomplished fact. On the night of the ball the Empress presented the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour to M. de Lesseps in the name of the Emperor. At one time there was serious talk of the Empress's not prosecuting her journey to Suez, but

making sail at once for France, *viâ* Port Saïd. It was urged, however, with great justice, that the curtailment of the original programme would be seized upon by the opponents of the Canal as an excuse for denying the completeness of its success; and, after communications had been exchanged between Compiègne and the *Aigle*, it was resolved to proceed with the progress. But it was found necessary to protract the journey to Suez from one day to two. Between the Bitter Lakes and the Red Sea the tide runs very fast and strong. Now experience has shown that, for vessels to steer safely through the Canal, they must have a good deal of way upon them. In order, however, to secure this advantage, when a ship is steaming down stream with the tide, it is necessary to go at a greater rate of speed than is consistent with due regard to the effect of the wash upon the banks; consequently it was deemed advisable that the inaugural expedition should sail against, not with, the tide; and as, both on Friday and Saturday, the tide was on the flow from the Red Sea at an early hour, it was decided that the fleet should proceed only as far as the Bitter Lakes on the first night after leaving Ismailia.

In a dramatic point of view, this alteration of the programme was injurious to the effectiveness of the in-

augural spectacle. The excitement had culminated on the Wednesday; and comparatively little interest was felt about the question as to what success might attend the progress of the fleet over a section of the Canal which had been already traversed. So slight, indeed, was the interest, that the English yacht the *Cambria* determined to precede the Royal squadron, and, sailing at an early hour from Ismailia, reached Suez before sunset on the same day. As, however, I had seen the more important section of the opening in a small steamboat, and had thus been able to witness the crowning act of the whole spectacle, I resolved to remain with the fleet, and to resume my old quarters on board the *Fayoum*.

There was no hurry about starting, and it was twelve o'clock on Friday morning before the *Aigle* slipped away from her anchorage, and, with the Imperial standard of France flying from the mainmast, made steam for the south-east corner of Lake Timsah, where the Canal winds out of the mere at a sharp angle. The Emperor of Austria's yacht, the *Grăf*, followed; and, according to the programme, the *Fayoum* was to have come next in order. But no programme is ever very rigidly adhered to in Egypt; and our Arab captain, firmly believing, like most of his countrymen, that discretion is the better

part of valour, gave way to every ship which endeavoured to squeeze past him, till we fell more and more to the rear in the long straggling file of vessels which were following in the wake of the *Aigle*. The exit from Lake Timsah is, and I think always will be, an awkward place in the voyage across the Isthmus. The land at this point stretches out into a shallow lagoon; the course is very indistinctly marked, a large number of the signal poles having been knocked down by the wash of the steamers; and the dredging at the mouth of the lake having been attended with exceptional difficulty, is not yet fully completed. In consequence, there was a long and ugly block in passing from the lake into the Canal. It should, however, be remembered that the conditions under which the experiment of the opening was tried were infinitely harder than those which are likely to attend the passage of ordinary merchant ships through the Canal. Under normal circumstances, it is most improbable you should have a couple of score of vessels all following each other as fast as possible, and all trying to outstrip each other. Moreover, even if this could be the case, each captain would be guided solely by regard to rules of seamanship, and would not, as in the present instance, have to take into account all kinds of col-

lateral considerations as to Royal precedence and naval etiquette. Just as we were entering the Canal we were ordered to give place by an Austrian frigate, on the plea that she had an Italian ambassador on board—an odd plea, by the way, to any one who, like myself, knew the Peninsula well in the old days of Austrian rule. The demand was not unreasonable in itself; but the result was that we almost grounded in the endeavour to give a wide berth to the frigate which hailed us. So it was with many other vessels of the fleet; and, as a consequence, for some hours a score or so of large ships lay huddled about the mouth of the Canal, and, having no way upon them, drifted helplessly upon the sand shoals with which the channel is surrounded. The first eight ships or so, all men-of-war, got out of the lake easily enough, and steamed away freely. The *Fayoum*, however, got stranded near the bar, and seemed determined to stick there indefinitely. As our captain was very far from eager about passing the Canal at all, and had told me before leaving Port Saïd that he never expected to get to Suez for ten years to come, I thought it best to entrust my fortunes to another vessel. By the kindness of the Telegraph Construction Company, I had already been invited to take up my quarters upon the

Hawk; but that bird of prey was already away down the Canal, and an attempt to catch her up in a rowing boat proved unavailing. Happily for me, I got my boat taken in tow by the *Newport*, a British Government steamer whose special duty it was to take soundings throughout the Canal for the use of the Admiralty. It was very pleasant to be transferred from the bustle, fuss, and noise of an Egyptian vessel, manned by an Arab crew, to the quiet and order of an English man-of-war. I was assured by the officers that the only obstructions they had encountered in their journey arose from the clumsiness with which the craft about them were steered; and certainly, as we glided on, at the rate of six knots an hour, between the high sandbanks, it seemed difficult to imagine there was any especial difficulty or danger about that pleasant, easy transit. We passed the sunken rock at Serapeum without slackening speed, as the soundings showed ample water for the *Newport*, which draws only fifteen feet. I am assured, however, that some months must elapse before the channel can be sufficiently cleared of rock to admit of the passage of ships drawing much more than seventeen feet. The average depth of the Canal is twenty-three feet; but in this short section of rocky bed, whose

length does not exceed a hundred mètres, the depth of water is not over eighteen, and, in order to deepen it, the rock will have to be blasted away—a work which must necessarily consume much time and labour. In consequence of the long delay at the mouth of the Canal, it was five o'clock before we passed out of the trench which leads from Ismailia to Serapeum into the open water of the Bitter Lakes. The sun was setting behind the rocky range of Gebel-Atka, which overhangs the desert hard by Suez; and the mountains, east and west, the dark blue waters of the Lake, the golden expanse of sand, the fleecy clouds which hovered round the horizon, were all lit up with a gorgeous variety of hue and tints and shades, not to be matched even in those Levantine regions which, for me, have seemed till now to offer the very perfection of colour-beauty. In the distance we could see the masts of the *Aigle* and her consort standing out dim, and yet distinct, against the sky, whose shade of cobalt blue was fading fast as the sunlight died away into a pale violet tint.

Very soon after our leaving the narrow channel of the Canal, the floating buoys vanished from sight, and we were left to steer our course as we liked by aid of chart and compass; so we steamed on over the vast

expanse of the inland sea till, after dark, we came up with the Imperial squadron, and cast anchor off the spit of land which divides the Bitter Lakes into two unequal portions, the northern section being some five times the area of the southern. Before nightfall seventeen ships of the expedition had come up to the point of anchorage, and all through the night the little fleet lay moored in the midst of the Bitter Lakes. As it turned out, just after the *Fayoum* had got off the sand-bank, the *Péluse* and the *Rapid* got aground across the bar at the entrance to the Canal, and stopped the passage of the remainder of the fleet. Thus our contingent was a small one, compared with the numbers which started from Port Saïd. Still, a score of large ships—the *Hawk* being the only one which was not a Government vessel—make a goodly show upon the waters of a land-locked lake. Rockets were fired and blue-lights displayed from the ships at anchor. There was a party on board the *Aigle*, to which all the chief officers of the various vessels were invited; and it was late before the lamps were put out, and the only light reflected on those tranquil waters was that of the moon at the full. There were men on board the *Hawk*, worthy of all credit, who declared to me that they had ridden, not a year ago,

over the desert sands lying fathoms deep beneath the waters on which our fleet rode at anchor. Their statement was corroborated by every description of written and oral testimony; and yet I found it hard to reconcile the assertion to the evidence of my senses. Any hypothesis, however improbable, seemed preferable to the supposition that these one hundred and twenty odd square miles of sea could have been created in the midst of the desert. When I went to sleep, lulled by the rocking of the *Hawk*, as she rolled gently from side to side with the ebb and flow of the waters, I could not help fancying that when I woke in the morning I should find the lake had vanished like a mirage of the desert. But when morning broke I found that we were already under way, and steaming behind the *Aigle*, now steering due south across the Bitter Lakes for the Canal which leads to Suez.

There being plenty of sea-room, and the number of our fleet being much diminished, there was nothing visible yesterday of the confusion which had characterised the breaking-up of the fleet on Friday morning. One by one the ships fell into their appointed place, and entered the Canal at the foot of the Bitter Lakes without any detention. The *Aigle*, being a very fast

vessel, soon got ahead of all her convoy; and the voyage through the last section of the Canal was absolutely devoid of incident. It was pleasant to sit upon the deck in the fresh morning air, pleasant to catch glimpses of the desert, pleasant to watch the masts of the *Aigle* fade out of sight into the smoke which clustered round them; while, at the same time, the hills above Suez grew even clearer and sharper in outline. But the sense of placid repose which remains associated with my memory of that bright forenoon sail is not linked with much observation worth recording. The dredges, with which the channel had been well-nigh blocked up only a week before, had vanished as if by magic; the workmen were gone, the sheds deserted; and a few Bedouin tents pitched near the banks were almost the only traces of human life the eye could detect far or near.

Long before we reached Suez, we could tell by the white puffs of smoke which rose up into the sky from the south, that the *Aigle* had entered the roadstead. It was one o'clock before we turned the corner of the long piers which enclose the end of the Canal, and found ourselves once more on the open sea. Steaming slowly across the neck of the Red Sea, we passed the new quay, decked out with triumphal arches, flags, and wreaths, cast anchor in the

outer dock under shelter of the breakwater, and our cruise was at an end.

The quays and wharves were crowded with knots of holiday folk, and there was no lack of cheering and counter-cheering, as ship after ship sailed up to its anchorage. But the first flush of exultation had been exhausted by the reception of the *Aigle*, and even at its best the excitement was far inferior to that of the first day at Ismailia. The occasion in itself was not calculated to stir up so much feeling, and the shore population of Suez was a mere drop in the bucket compared with the multitude gathered together on the shores of Lake Timsah. The afternoon was occupied in farewell visits between the various Royal personages, the Emperor of Austria and the Crown Prince of Prussia starting by special train for Cairo; and there was the usual amount of saluting and cannonading. In the evening, the Empress, escorted by M. de Lesseps, visited the town of Suez on foot, and dropped into several of the curiosity shops with which this quaint terminus town abounds. At night the ships were illuminated, and a display of fireworks, of more than usual brilliancy, brought the Suez fêtes to an end. The ropes and masts hung with lamps combined, with the long lines of light with which the buildings on the quay were

pricked out, to create the illusion that a fairy city of fire had been set afloat by some magician's wand upon the waters of the Red Sea.

There were dinners given on board of all the ships in the harbour in honour of the occasion. Not the least noteworthy was one given by Mr. Pender, on the deck of the *Hawk*, to a large party of English gentlemen. Besides our host, we had Lord Houghton, whose presence at any great public gathering seems to be a matter of course; Mr. Elliot, M.P., the great promoter of submarine telegraphy; Mr. Gregory, M.P.; Mr. Hawkshaw, the one English engineer who had the foresight and courage to foretell the future success of the Suez Canal; the Mayor of Manchester; and a score of other gentlemen, each of whom was a man of more or less mark in his own line of life. Mr. Pender, Mr. Elliot, and Mr. Hawkshaw—men whose opinion on such a question is worth recording—stated their conviction, in after-dinner speeches, that not only was the Canal an assured success in an engineering point of view, but that it was available for present use, and that from this day forward the tide of traffic between India and Europe must flow through the Suez Canal.

After my previous letters—written, I may add, while

the failure of the Canal was deemed certain by almost every resident in Egypt, and by most of the English visitors to the opening ceremony—I need hardly say that I coincide entirely in this opinion. I have not the time now to enter on any discussion as to the reasons besides those I have already mentioned in former letters which induce me to hold this view more firmly than ever. Yesterday I asked an English merchant captain of great experience, what part of the Canal he had found most difficult to navigate? His answer was, "There is no difficulty anywhere. It is as easy sailing through the Canal as going through the Pool." Immediately on the arrival of the *Hawk* at Suez, it was determined, on the captain's report, to send her back to England to embark the shore-end of the cable for India, and then to sail for Aden, *viâ* the Suez Canal. Yesterday a large English shipowner telegraphed orders to London, to freight two of his ships, of about 2,000 tons each, for Bombay by the Isthmus route. I mention these facts, because they come within my own knowledge, as practical testimony to the success of the Canal.

AFTER THE OPENING.

AFTER the passage had been effected, and the *Fayoum* was riding at anchor in the waters of the Red Sea, I met the Captain again, and was saluted by him with the remark: "I told you we should get through all right." And the odd part of the incident is that, to my belief, both statements were made in perfect good faith. The spectacle of the brilliant success which had attended the opening had had such an influence upon his imagination that he had completely forgotten his previous scepticism. In this he only followed the example of the vast majority of the residents in Egypt, native as well as foreign. Within the last three weeks which preceded the inauguration of the Canal, I cannot recollect speaking to a single tourist, merchant, or official, not directly connected with the enterprise, who did not ridicule the notion that the Canal could either be opened by the date announced, or, if opened, could be used for practical purposes. Now, on the other

hand, the very same men refuse to listen to any criticism as to the absolute perfection of the Canal. The explanation of this sudden revulsion of feeling is that the opposition to the isthmus route in Egypt was based far more on prejudice than on conviction. In the first place, the Canal, if successful, must interfere with many of the most powerful interests in Egypt. It will diminish the importance of Alexandria as a harbour in favour of Port Saïd. It will deprive the railroad across the isthmus of its very lucrative transit traffic. It will tend to place Cairo still further out of the route of ordinary travel. It will decrease the value of properties which lie upon what has been hitherto the sole line of communication from sea to sea. It will interfere, in fact, with existing interests. Moreover, the Canal always has been, is to the present day, and probably will remain for some time, a purely French undertaking, and the French are disliked in Egypt by the natives because they are Europeans, and by other Europeans because they are French. The Anglo-Egyptian looks upon the Franco-Egyptian with feelings which you would have to go many a long year back to match in the old country. Owing to a strange error in our diplomacy,—an error for which Lord Palmerston must be held to be mainly responsible,—England set her face against the Suez Canal from its

inception. That the Canal ought not to be made, could never be made, and would not pay if it were made, were three articles of faith with British diplomatists in the East; and there was, probably, not an Englishman in Egypt, from the highest consular dignity to the humblest shop-boy in a British store, who did not deem it a point of honour to speak disparagingly of the Canal and its supporters. This feeling had, undoubtedly, diminished as time advanced, but still enough of it remained to the last to render the public opinion of the British community in Egypt lukewarm, to say the least, in its estimate of the Canal's chance of success. To all these causes we must add the natural tendency of human nature to look coldly upon the achievements of persons with whom we are familiarly acquainted. Everybody who was anybody in Egypt knew Lesseps intimately, and had known him for years as an active, bustling, good-humoured Frenchman, somewhat given to boasting of his own achievements sanguine in his expectations, loose, perhaps, in his statements. It went against the grain to admit that this voluble adventurer could really have been the artificer of a mighty enterprise,—the discoverer of a problem whose solution has puzzled the wisdom of ages.

It may be well here to pay the tribute which is justly

due to the author of the Canal. I have no doubt as time goes on men will begin to say that Lesseps had but a share in the actual construction of the canal; and that the credit of the achievement ought rightly to be divided with others. After one fashion this statement may be true. Columbus would never have got to America if he had not been ably seconded. But just as the discovery of the New World is due after all to the Genoese mariner, so the creation of the ship canal is due to Lesseps and to Lesseps only. Had it not been for his untiring energy, for his immovable faith in his own success, for his imperturbable good humour, his scheme must have foundered time after time. To any one who knows the obstacles with which the Canal had to contend, who sees what has been accomplished, who understands how completely the work was one man's work alone, there is something at once gratifying and disheartening in the thought how much could be achieved in this world of ours by one brave heart, one clear head, and one stout will,—and yet how little is actually achieved. Let me say this also, that in a country where it is assumed, as a matter of course, that every public man has some end to promote, some private advantage to secure in every act of his life, I have never heard one solitary insinuation that Lesseps had filled his

own pockets, or made money in any way out of the undertaking with which his name is associated. If the Canal succeed, he will no doubt be largely remunerated; but in any other event he will derive no benefit from his labours, except the by no means exorbitant salary he has received as manager of the company.

It is too early at the time at which I write to express any positive opinion as to the commercial success of the Canal. An English shipowner of high reputation, who has gone very closely into the calculation, assures me that the passage of three ships per diem, carrying two thousand tons each, would produce a sufficient income to pay 5 per cent. upon the capital subscribed. It seems to be agreed on all hands that the actual amount of money expended on the construction of the canal does not, as yet, exceed sixteen millions sterling. The improvements contemplated by the company, of whose nature I shall speak presently, do not exceed two millions and a half in estimated cost. If therefore a million and a half be added for the settlement of the undefined pecuniary liabilities, which must always accrue at the completion of so vast an enterprise, the capital on which interest will have to be paid would amount to twenty millions sterling. Receipts, therefore, at the rate of two thousand seven hundred a day would

nearly provide for a dividend of five per cent. I am not, however, disposed to attach much importance to this calculation, for the following reasons. Firstly, if three ships should go through regularly each day, we may be absolutely certain that a much larger number of vessels would use the Canal. Secondly, it still remains to be seen what will be the cost of keeping the channel open. M. Lavallé, the chief contractor of the works, has offered to undertake dredging the Canal for forty thousand pounds a year; but this estimate can hardly be considered to be based on any very reliable data. After all, it is still mere guess-work how the action of the water that is set in motion by the constant passing to and fro of large vessels will affect the banks of the Canal. Till this is known, no notion can be formed as to the expense of working the canal; and till that notion is formed, nobody can, with any accuracy, say what chance the shareholders have of realizing a dividend on their investments.

I think, however, that this question of dividend or no dividend is one which may very fairly be left out of count. Very few of the Canal shares are held in England; and the virtuous indignation which was so loudly expressed in our papers not long ago, at the wickedness of M. de Lesseps in inducing his countrymen and countrywomen to embark

their savings in an undertaking which could never pay, came with a bad grace from a country which was the originator of the Thames Tunnel, the Great Eastern, the London Chatham and Dover, and a thousand other schemes for promoting public works at the cost of private persons. The one question which concerns the outer world is, whether the canal can pay its working expenses. The London, Chatham, and Dover Railroad does earn money in excess of its outlay by running trains over its line, and therefore, whoever owns the line, trains will run between Dover and London *vid* Chatham. The Thames Tunnel cost as much to keep it open as it earned in the way of receipts, if not actually more; and therefore, after a fitful existence, it is converted into a railway tunnel. Both enterprises were equally ruinous to their original shareholders. Even admitting that the canal should be added to the category of gigantic pecuniary failures,—an admission I am not as yet prepared to make,—it still has to be seen whether its failure will be like that of the Thames Tunnel or of the Chatham and Dover. I am myself of opinion that, supposing the Canal can be kept open, there is no possibility of doubt as to its paying its way. It is easy to prove anything by figures, and the Alexandrine merchants will give you statistics which show that it will always be

cheaper, quicker, and more convenient to send goods by sea to Alexandria, unload them at the port, carry them in carts to the railway station, transmit them by rail to Suez, and then re-embark them in another vessel for India, than to send them in the same bottom from England to Bombay. It is impossible for a man not personally conversant with the shipping trade to declare positively that these statistics are wrong; but we may fairly say the statement is too improbable a one to be accepted without the evidence of actual facts. Moreover, in all the many calculations of this nature I have had laid before me, the calculator invariably took no account of the circumstance that the transit dues charged by the Canal will infallibly be lowered if they should be found so high as to discourage the employment of the sea-to-sea route. On the other hand, it is, I think, evident enough, without the aid of figures, that the dues of the Canal, the cost of pilotage at the entrance and exit, and the increased rate of premium of insurance charged for the navigation of the Red Sea, will increase the cost of freight by the Isthmus, so as to make it equal to if not higher than that demanded by the long sea-route by the Cape of Good Hope. But the shipowner will make his profit by the fact that, *vid* Suez, he can make four voyages a year, where formerly he could make but one; and to this

gain in turning over his capital there will be added the advantage that steamers will be able to take far more cargo by this route than by the old one, as they will coal at different stations along their journey, instead of having to take their whole supply of coals out with them on starting from England. For long voyages steamers are rapidly superseding sailing ships as the carriers of freight; and with the increasing competition in all mercantile transactions speed is becoming daily an element of greater importance. Even supposing, therefore, that the navigation of the Red Sea should prove an insuperable obstacle to the use of the Canal by sailing vessels, a very large portion of the Indo-European trade would still pass through it by means of steamboats. As to the possibility of navigating the Red Sea without steam I can express no opinion. All I can say is, that a very distinguished English officer, who has been long acquainted with the Red Sea waters, assured me the other day that there was no more difficulty in sailing through it with proper care, than through any other inland sea he had ever navigated.

All the minor difficulties about transit dues, pilotage, draught of vessels, anchorage in port, and so forth, which I hear constantly urged as reasons why the Canal cannot be employed as a permanent route of ship transit, seem to me

rather beside the mark. Supposing,—and I admit this supposition is the real point to be determined,—that M. de Lesseps has constructed a canal from sea to sea, through which vessels carrying large cargoes can pass, then I feel no doubt that such vessels will pass. Trade, like water, always finds its own level; and just as the waters of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean flowed into the Bitter Lakes as soon as the dams were removed, so the course of trade will, by virtue of a natural law, pass along the shortest route in preference to the longest. If the vessels at present engaged in the Indian and China trades cannot be conveyed effectively through the canal, vessels of less draught will be constructed which can serve the purpose; and, which is more important for us Englishmen to bear in mind; if the traders who have the trade by the Cape route in their hands do not accommodate themselves to the exigencies of the new route, the trade will pass into other hands.

Has a new sea highway been constructed?—This is the real point at issue. The point is one on which I do not profess to speak with absolute certainty,—concerning which also I must mistrust all who do speak with such certainty. All I wish to do is to describe the Canal as I have seen it. Let us start then with Port Saïd, the new harbour, which has been called into being on the shores of

the Mediterranean. Engineers of high authority proved beforehand that this harbour could never be made. It has been made, and, therefore, I attach less importance to kindred assertions that it can never be kept open. Once upon a time the Port of Pelusium stood much where Port Saïd stands now; but I take it that in its palmiest days Pelusium was only used by ships of small burthen; and the harbour, such as it was, had been filled up long ago. So for all practical purposes M. de Lesseps has had to build a completely new port. This work has been effected by digging out great basins on the shore, and by running two immense piers into the sea, between which a channel has been scooped out into deep water. As things are now, vessels of three thousand tons, drawing twenty feet of water, have entered Port Saïd without the slightest difficulty. The approach from the sea is far better than that into the port of Alexandria: and it must be a tempest of a violence very unusual in the Mediterranean which could hinder vessels from making the port by daylight. In fact, as the distance across the mouth of the harbour is half a mile, sailing vessels will have room to tack in entering it. When all the lighthouses, buoys, signals, &c. are in full working order, Port Saïd will stand for the present in the first class of Mediterranean harbours. Will it remain so?

That is to some degree a matter of speculation. The Nile, as everybody knows, discharges every year a vast amount of alluvial deposit into the Mediterranean; the shore of Egypt encroaches in consequence upon the sea. And as the western pier of Port Saïd harbour lies right across the current of waters which flow from the Damietta bank of the Nile, a sort of scum of sand and soil and sediment collects rapidly about this pier. Already a sandbank has been formed along some hundred feet or so of the shore end of this breakwater, which when it was constructed was entirely surrounded by water, and every year this sandbank increases in length. In the course, therefore, of years this sandbank must reach the mouth of the harbour. The constructors, however, of the port allege that this contingency cannot take place for a very long time, and that when it does occur, the evil can be obviated by prolonging the piers into deep water. A more immediate difficulty arises from the mode in which the pier is constructed. It is not a solid block of masonry, but a sort of network of blocks placed one above the other. Through the interstices between these blocks the current streams in, bearing the delta deposit with it, and this deposit settles down in the bed of the channel between the piers. It is urged on behalf of the Canal,

that this deposit can easily be cleared away by dredging. But I am told by very eminent engineers not unfriendly to the Canal, that it will assuredly be necessary to close up the interstices in the pier at a cost of about half a million sterling.

Be this as it may, Port Saïd, for the time being, is a first-class harbour, with room, as I saw on the day of the opening, to accommodate a hundred vessels of large burthen in the harbour alone. If more accommodation should be wanted, it can be supplied easily by increasing the number and size of the docks. From Port Saïd the Canal stretches, in one large unbroken reach, through Lake Menzaleh, a distance of over twenty miles. I have often seen in newspaper comments upon the Canal the assumption made that the construction of the Canal was facilitated by its passing through a series of natural inland lakes. This assumption is totally erroneous. The only lakes across whose waters ships sail, in passing from sea to sea, are artificial lakes, created in the course of the Canal's construction. The natural lakes, such as Lake Menzaleh, Lake Ballah, and the Lagoons, near Suez, were obstacles, not aids, to the making of the trench. Lake Menzaleh, for instance, is an immense shallow mere, over whose waters nothing larger than a fishing smack could

possibly sail. Oddly enough, it was in the Port Saïd-Kantara reach that the *Latif* ran aground, on the night preceding the opening, and thereby all but closed the Canal against the passage of the inaugural fleet. At a moment of such intense excitement as that which preceded the opening of the channel across the Isthmus, it is intelligible enough that any wild rumour should have been credited. But the notion that a British officer like the commander of the *Latif* purposely ran his ship aground to thwart the triumph of M. de Lesseps, is too ludicrous to be seriously entertained; and I believe the true explanation of the *Latif's* mishap points to one of the most serious inconveniences which attend the passage of the Canal. In its voyage as a pioneer vessel down the stream, the *Latif* had suddenly to swerve out of her straight course to avoid coming into collision with a heavily-laden barge coming up stream, which was either unwilling or unable to draw up on one side. The sudden swerve sent the *Latif* upon the bank, and her bows became embedded in the soft earth. Lying across the channel, as she did, she could only free her bows by backing her stern into the opposite bank; and it was solely by the assistance of some hundreds of men, who were sent down to the spot and warped her off with ropes, that the ship was got off the bank, after

many hours' detention. Like casualties have occurred to most vessels that have been as yet up and down the Canal. As long as a ship keeps exactly in mid-stream all is well; but the slope of the trough is so steep, and the bed of the channel is as yet so narrow, that a very slight deviation from the course will suffice to send a ship aground; and the twist given to her by the mere fact of running aground is almost sure to place her athwart the channel. No doubt the trough of the Canal can be, and will be, widened hereafter by dredging; but I do not see as yet how this dredging process can be carried on to any large extent while ships are passing up and down the Canal.

From Kantara, where Lake Menzaleh ends, the Canal is carried across the desert. If you walk, as I have done, through the desert close by the side of this section, it seems absolutely impossible that a lasting trench could be cut through it. In walking, you sink over your ankles with every step you take on the sand; and the particles are so fine, that there appears to be no kind of cohesion between them. The one answer to your doubts as to the possibility of the trench being made is, that the trench is made, and holds water. The trench is there, it has been filled with water for many months, steam-dredges

have been constantly passing up and down it, and it is as perfect to all outward appearance as when it was first filled with the current. The extent of the wash, about which so much has been said, depends entirely upon the speed with which the passage of the Canal is made, not upon the size of the paddle-wheels or screws by which the vessel passing is propelled. At four knots an hour, the largest steamer which passed from sea to sea produced almost no perceptible wash; while a little steam-launch, in which I once made the journey along the Canal, and which went at double that speed, created a very considerable wave. Still, the crumbling away at the edge of the water is very trifling as yet in magnitude; and this detrition can be easily remedied, as it has already been in some portions, by laying layers of stone along the water's edge. I think it very possible that the bed of the Canal is stirred up as ships pass over it into a sort of quagmire of sand and water; but as soon as the motion ceases the sand sinks again, and the formation of any shoal can be prevented by the use of dredges. Near the entrance into Lake Timsah the Canal twists and turns in a very tortuous fashion. There is no reason for this twisting; and the curves are found to be so inconvenient that the course will have to be straightened—a work presenting

no engineering difficulties, but requiring a considerable outlay.

Ismailia, the town on the shore of Lake Timsah, is, like the lake itself, the creation of M. de Lesseps. A very few years ago there was not a dwelling, or a blade of grass, or drop of water, to be found here. Now it is a flourishing town, with a population of some ten thousand souls, and with luxuriant vegetation round about its houses. All this change is due to the Sweet Water Canal which the company has constructed between the lake and the Nile; and the existence of Ismailia is a proof, if proof were wanted, of how the whole of the Egyptian desert might be peopled and fertilized, if only it could be brought into communication with the waters of the Nile.

Lake Timsah, which lies exactly half-way between sea and sea, will be for a long time to come the place where vessels going up and down stream will pass each other. I do not say ships cannot pass in the Canal itself; but the experiment must always be attended with risk for the present; and, as a rule, the crossing will take place either here or in the Bitter Lakes. As I have said, the Canal may be widened hereafter; the constructors are of opinion, —an opinion, I may mention, shared by Mr. Hawkshaw, —that the Canal at its present width is quite available for

ordinary ship traffic, and that it would be folly to undertake any further widening till experience has shown what amount of traffic may be relied upon hereafter. Thus, for the present, Ismailia will be the half-way halting-house for ships between Suez and Port Saïd.

The section from Lake Timsah to the Bitter Lakes is a straight piece of cutting through the desert, which presented little difficulty, and was constructed with great rapidity. Everything went on swimmingly till ten days before the opening. Then the dredging-buckets suddenly struck something hard. Explorations were made, and it was found that in the very centre of the Canal there cropped up a layer of rock about eighty mètres in length. By immense exertions enough of the rock was blasted away to give a depth of seventeen to eighteen feet over the rock. The maximum depth of vessels allowed to take part in the procession had to be reduced from twenty feet to sixteen, and three months at least will be required before the layer can be removed by blasting. Till this is done the Canal can only be used by ships drawing not more than sixteen and a half feet. It is an immense object for the company to liberate itself from the obligation of paying five per cent. interest on its shares,—an obligation which is binding upon them by the deed of

association,—till such time as the Canal is open for the passage of vessels drawing at least twenty feet. In consequence, no vessels drawing this depth are, I believe, refused admission; but their cargo is removed, and shipped in barges through the Canal, at the expense of the company, and thus they are so far relieved in weight as to be enabled to pass through the Canal.

After passing Serapeum, where the sunken rock was found, the Canal opens out into the Bitter Lakes. The theory that the waters of these lakes would be exhausted by evaporation or percolation through the sand more rapidly than they could be filled, has been disproved by the evidence of facts; and whatever doubt there may be as to the permanence of the Canal, there can be no question that so long as the Canal furnishes a water conduit between the two seas, this inland sea will continue to be a sheet of water navigable by great ships. The lakes have not yet been carefully surveyed or sounded, but the experience of the inaugural fleet has shown that there is ample room within these lakes for a large number of big vessels to navigate at ease.

From the Bitter Lakes to the Red Sea the Canal again passes in a trench through the sands of the desert. This section is very incompletely finished; but owing to its

proximity to the lakes on one side, and to the Red Sea on the other,—from both of which places dredges can be brought up without delay,—there will be no difficulty in increasing both its width and depth, without any stoppage of the through traffic. It is probable that the piers into the Red Sea will have to be lengthened; but on the other hand the docks of the company on the western side of the Red Sea, and the causeway over which the railroad is carried which connects them with the Suez and Egyptian railroad system, are in perfect working order.

Thus it will be seen that, if my estimate be correct, the Canal is now completed as an engineering experiment. Not only has the whole of the inaugural squadron, numbering some sixty craft of all sizes, passed to and fro from one end to the other, but since the opening several ships have already sailed through it in the way of business. Among others a Dutch frigate, the *Curaçoa,* from Java, drawing eighteen feet, has actually got through from the Red Sea, and pursued its journey to Holland through the Mediterranean. As a mechanical problem, therefore, the piercing of the isthmus is an accomplished fact. Whether the channel can be kept open at a cost not exceeding the receipts from ship dues is an issue that

the future must decide. I have no doubt that a considerable sum of money will have to be raised for the completion of the Canal; and the prospects of the company will depend in no small measure upon the amount required, and the terms on which this amount can be raised. Still the interests, not only of Egypt, but of Europe and India, are so deeply involved in keeping the Canal open, that I feel convinced money will be forthcoming, not only to complete the work, but to keep it in working order when completed.

THE FÊTES AT CAIRO.

CAIRO, *November* 26.

IT is a well-known maxim in the theatrical world that the spectators who express their dissatisfaction most loudly, who are most grudging of their applause, most impatient at the waits, most severe in their criticism at every hitch in the performance, are the people who come in with orders. An illustration of the truth on which this maxim is founded might have been observed at the conclusion of the journey through the Canal. Everybody was in a hurry to get back to Cairo as quickly as possible; and, as everybody considered that he had been grievously wronged if a whole compartment had not been reserved for his own private accommodation, the indignation of the Viceroy's guests at finding they had to scramble for their seats may, in the time-honoured phrase of provincial reporters, be better imagined than described. Anybody who has ever been to Epsom on a Derby-day by rail, or who has returned from the Crystal Palace on a fête night,

or has even come home from Richmond on a fine Sunday evening in summer, knows well enough the meaning of a scramble and a crush on a railway platform. When to the normal difficulty of finding places for a hundred people in a carriage which holds ten at a pinch you add a blazing hot sun, and the circumstance that guards and porters spoke a language utterly unintelligible to the passengers, and that all the officials, after the fashion of Eastern nations, succumbed at once, in hopeless, helpless apathy, to the pressure placed upon them, you have the elements of such a scene of confusion as was witnessed upon the platform of Suez on the day following the opening of the Canal. Still, as somehow or other we all got through, and reached Cairo in the course of the evening, I don't think that we had much to complain of, especially as we had not a sixpence to pay for our journey. However, we, as a body, considered ourselves to have been infamously swindled, and many of our fellow-passengers, French as well as English, vented their displeasure upon the unoffending Egyptian commissioners in language which, I sincerely hope, was unintelligible to those to whom it was addressed.

After a long, hot day's journey, we were landed at Cairo just in time to dress for the Viceroy's ball, which

was to be given at the Boulak Palace in honour of the Emperor of Austria. I don't know that there is much to be said about the ball, as, indeed, there is little to be said about most of the state galas of the Viceregal Court. The one ambition of the Khediveh—as long, at any rate, as he is entertaining his European guests—is to reproduce Europe in Egypt. His efforts are successful in their way; and it would be difficult in London or Paris to give a handsomer ball than the one at which I had the good fortune to be present. There were any number of wax lights, crowds of handsomely dressed men and women, a brilliant orchestra, a capital supper, and a very regiment of waiters in gorgeous liveries. All these things are good in their way; and it may seem ungrateful to grumble because they were not good in a different way. Still, you could hardly help asking yourself why you should have come to the Nile to be present at an entertainment you might have seen given to much better effect on the banks of the Thames or the Seine. The men were dressed by Poole, the women by Worth; the orchestra was composed of Germans; the dance music was taken from the "Belle Hélène" and the "Grande Duchesse." The waiters were Frenchmen, dressed in red English liveries; and the supper might have been furnished by Chevet or Gunter.

Except for the fezes worn by a number of the foreigners in the employment of the Egyptian Government, there was nothing to recall the fact that you were in the land of the Pharaohs. There was a small sprinkling of Arab Sheikhs; but their proportion to the European guests—one, perhaps, in a hundred — was so small that their presence gave no character to the entertainment. The Emperor of Austria made but a short sojourn at the ball, and walked through the rooms with the Khediveh while the band played the Imperial Austrian March. Dancing was kept up to a very late hour; and the one picturesque incident of the whole evening was the change from the ball-room, where you fancied yourself in Europe, to the courtyard of the Palace, where white-clad syces, Arab donkey-boys, with their blue blouses and bare legs, and khavasses, with their hippopotamus whips, stood waiting for the departure of the guests.

Somewhat of a like criticism as to the total absence of any Oriental colouring may be made on the races given on Monday in the Abassieh Plain. Still, with all the good-will in the world, you cannot Anglicize the Desert, or Frenchify the vegetation of the East; and, therefore, about these Cairo races there was something not to be confounded with one's recollections of Epsom or the Bois de

Boulogne. You drove along a road lined with prickly pears, palm groves, and pepper-trees; you passed under the shadow of mosques whose walls are painted gridiron fashion, with broad stripes of red and yellow; you wound your way through dusky crowds of turbaned figures, through strings of camels, till at last you left behind you a barrack-looking palace, where Abbas Pacha used to keep his harem, and found yourself in mid-desert. Of all portions of the Sand sea which I have yet visited, this bay, if I may apply the term, which runs in through the Delta's shores right up to the outskirts of Cairo, corresponds most closely to my notion of what the Desert ought to be: a vast expanse of rolling billows of yellow sand stretches as far as the eye can reach. Here there are none of the ridges, hollows, heights, banks, and valleys which break the uniformity of the Desert as I have seen it elsewhere. The undulations in the surface of the sand are here so slight that, from a little distance, the Desert hard by the Abassieh looked flat. Only as you drew nearer could you perceive that the racecourse lay on the side of a great shelving slope. The sand was yellow, with a deep tawny hue; your carriage-wheels sunk well-nigh up to the axle as the horses tugged wearily over the plain; the sun glared from a sky dazzling to the sight with its

depth of cloudless blue. And yet there, upon a background so unfamiliar to the English eye, was placed the outward semblance of an English racecourse. Grand stand, Jockey Club enclosure, tents for refreshments, weighing paddocks, and all the rest of the *mise en scène* of a thriving provincial meeting, were provided for in the Desert. The course was marked out with ropes; the jockeys wore top-boots and velvet caps. Rows of London-built carriages, breaks, drags, barouches were drawn up on either side of the course; and, to make the illusion perfect, there were parties of gaily-dressed women unescorted by gentlemen, about whose lot in life no doubt could be entertained. The only things wanting were the ring and the roar of the betting men. Egypt, unfortunately, has not progressed far enough in its acquirement of Western civilization to have produced a Welcher.

There were crowds of Arabs, chiefly donkey-boys, syces, khavasses, or camel-drivers, collected about the stands, and they seemed to me to take more genuine interest in the racing than I ever witnessed in any racecourse crowd out of England. So far as I could see, none of the Egyptian ladies were present; and the carriage-company was exclusively composed of Europeans. At two o'clock the Khediveh and the Emperor of Austria drove up along the

racecourse in an open barouche with four horses, and with postilions and outriders dressed in English liveries; and the sport began forthwith. Race followed race with commendable rapidity. As the Viceroy dislikes to be kept waiting, and has the power to make his displeasure felt by very potent arguments, there were no false starts; and between two and six a dozen races were run, over distances varying from two to six miles in length. I confess that when you don't know the name of a single horse, and have not a sixpence on the event, the noble sport always seems to me to be singularly dull; and I doubt whether even sporting readers would be grateful to me for a correct card of the Cairo November meeting. The only incidents in the day's legitimate sport I need record are, that wherever English and Arab horses ran together, the former invariably won, and that one of the gentlemen riders was a brother correspondent, who, unfortunately for the credit of literature, did not mount the winning horse. The dulness, however, of the legitimate racing was made up for to some degree by an eminently illegitimate race for speed between dromedaries. Three started: one tailed off at an early period; and the remaining two trotted three times round the course, six miles in all, neck by neck, till they reached the Royal stand, when one of them, ridden by a

negro, shot ahead and won in a canter. Knowing people said both the beasts belonged to the same owner, and never raced at all. They certainly took twenty-seven minutes in doing six miles; whereas I was informed by Sir Samuel Baker, who probably knows more about dromedaries than most men, that they ought to run in full racing pace five miles in fifteen minutes. So far as I could observe with the aid of a field-glass, a great part of the distance was done at a swinging walk, the gallop or fast trot being resorted to only when in sight of the stands. The mystery to me was how the riders kept their seats. Perched up on the top of the hump in a little seat, not unlike that in which a Hansom cabman sits, they had no apparent support for their feet. Their legs dangled loosely on either side the dromedary's neck; and every moment you fancied they must fall off, as they leaned from side to side cracking their hippopotamus-hide whips. However, there was no accident; and the whole day's racing was unattended with a single casualty.

On Tuesday and Wednesday the Emperor of Austria visited the lions of Cairo. On the evening of the latter day he drove, in company with the Viceroy, to the Pyramids of Ghiseh. Dinner had been sent out beforehand; the road which, when I visited it a fortnight ago, was

under water in many parts, had been completely repaired; the dust over the ten miles' drive was kept down by watering machines; and, as the sunset was brilliant beyond even the ordinary brilliancy of Egyptian sunsets, the Royal party had an excellent view of the marvels of Egypt. During the day the Pyramids were visited and ascended by any number of foreign visitors; and, after nightfall, when all the strangers had gone home, except a few who, like myself, had heard some rumour of the programme, the Pyramid of Cheops was illuminated for the benefit of the Emperor. The spectacle was very pretty, and the long lines of the Pyramid's corners, lit up with magnesium lights, looked, from a little distance, like a series of Jacob's ladders ascending up to heaven. Rockets were fired at intervals along the high-road till the Emperor of Austria had reached his palace: and it was not till late at night that the road ceased to be encumbered with trains of camels bearing on their backs the English servants of the Khediveh, who had been sent out to the Pyramids in full livery. "Jeames" riding astride upon a camel in all the glory of powder, scarlet coat, and silk knee breeches! Such is one of the many anomalies you meet with in the land of the Pharaohs. Yesterday morning the Emperor returned to Alexandria, where he is to be present at a ball

given by the Viceroy, and to-morrow he sails for Europe. People say at Cairo that he is home-sick and tired of travel. It may well be so. He looks worn and weary and sad enough. Heaven knows he has had enough to sadden him.

THE CANAL AT WORK.

ISMAILIA, *Dec.* 18.

BEFORE leaving Egypt I was resolved to see how the Suez Canal looked when in actual working trim. With this object I landed at Port Saïd once again, in the hope of finding some vessel proceeding to Suez on which I could prosecute my journey. I did not, however, reach the port till after mid-day; and by that time it was too late to get on as far as Ismailia by daylight. The *Danube*, a large English steamer, had left in the morning; and as no merchant vessel was under orders to sail through the Canal for a couple of days, I was compelled to take my passage by the passenger boat which plies every morning between the sea and Lake Timsah, and to spend the afternoon and night at Port Saïd. The day passed on slowly and drearily enough. At the best of times Port Saïd is not a lively place, and at this moment it is suffering from the reaction which is always consequent upon a great excitement. When I had last seen it the harbour was filled with hun-

dreds of vessels; the town flaunted with flags; there were triumphal arches and ornamental kiosks everywhere; the streets swarmed with a motley multitude of many nations; the hum of countless voices was interrupted by the constant roar of cannon. Now all was quiet, sleepy, dull. The outer harbour was almost empty; the inner harbour, though it contained some thirty ships of large burthen, looked deserted by comparison; the flags had been taken down, the booths shut up, the arches removed; and the only reminiscences of the pageant of the 17th consisted of the two dummy obelisks at the entrance of the Canal; the canvas of their wooden framework was already peeling off under the influences of the heavy storm which visited the African coast in the course of last week.

Still, when I tried to recall the aspect of Port Saïd as I had seen it ten days before the opening, it seemed to me that I was looking on more life and activity than I remembered to have seen then. New hotels, shops, and warehouses were springing up in the main thoroughfares, and the town was certainly fuller of inhabitants. I am not sure, however, how far this increase can be regarded as permanent. At the present moment there has been a large influx into Port Saïd of workmen discharged from the Canal at the termination of the contracts. As I men-

tioned in a previous letter, the engagements of all men employed on the works expired at noon on the day of the opening; and, contrary to general expectation, very few of them have been renewed. The more prudent of the men have gone home with their earnings; but the ruck of the labourers and mechanics have loitered on at Port Saïd in hope of a fresh job, spending their money at the cafés, saloons, dram-shops, and houses of ill-repute with which the town is crowded. Brawls and drunken riots are of constant occurrence; and if you wished to enlist recruits for the regiments of the "enfants perdus" in Algeria, I suspect that Port Saïd, at this present time, would be the best of recruiting grounds. Amusements of a decent kind are not to be found in this African Wapping; and, even were it otherwise, prudent people shrink from going about much after dark at Port Saïd.

So I spent the evening in a café attached to our hotel, listening perforce to the conversation of a number of the *habitués*, who were all connected with the Canal in the capacity of foremen, overseers, clerks, or skilled artisans, and who, one and all, had some not very intelligible grievance about the changes that had been introduced, or were about to be introduced, into the management of the company. From them I learnt, what I heard after-

wards confirmed on better authority, that Voisin Bey, who has hitherto been director-in-chief of the works, is to be replaced by M. Lavallé, the head of the firm of contractors by whom the later portion of the Canal has been constructed. This change is understood to entail a fundamental alteration in the whole system of management, though of what exact nature I am too little acquainted with the details of the undertaking to do more than surmise.

With the early dawn I was on board the Transit Company's steamer, and was again sailing between the high sandbanks, whose aspect is now so familiar to me. I had expected, from what I had seen beforehand, that I should find a great deal of work going on along the Canal, and that, at any rate, I should see the dredges again in full employment. I found nothing of the kind. Between Port Saïd and Lake Timsah there was only one solitary dredging machine at work; and of the half-dozen dredges or so still anchored in the stream, the major portion were disabled by some accident, and were left moored where they were only because they needed repairs before their removal. It was obvious to the most careless observer that the work was deemed, rightly or wrongly, to be concluded. On our way up, we encountered long strings of

barges, filled with barrows, planks, picks, scaffolding poles, and so forth, employed on the works, which were on their way down to Port Saïd, to be sold off there for refuse, or shipped away to Europe. Now, no technical knowledge is required to be aware that implements of this sort fetch little or nothing when they are sold, and yet cost a great deal to buy when they are required for use. The mere fact, therefore, that the company or the contractors were getting rid of all these odds and ends of their working plant would alone be proof, without more direct evidence, that there is no immediate intention of resuming the works upon the Canal.

In consequence of this almost absolute cessation of all labour, there is little or nothing to say about the look of the Canal, unless I were to repeat what I have already described. Excepting the barges filled with barrows, the Canal was almost deserted on the day I last traversed it. We met the *Adonis*, a French Government despatch-boat —a small three-masted steamer of, I should guess, about a thousand tons burthen—steaming down the channel at some seven or eight knots an hour. The *Adonis* had made the voyage from Cochin China by the Red Sea, and was pursuing her journey direct to Toulon across the Isthmus. There was about her transit something of a

business air, if I may use the phrase, which was wanting to the passage of the Inaugural Squadron. But, as a matter of fact, her passage was no test of the capabilities of the Canal, as compared with that of many other vessels which have gone through both at the time of and since the opening. Throughout the seven hours' steam from Port Saïd to Ismailia, though I paid special attention to the state of the banks on either side, I could observe no trace whatever of the crumbling in of the sand under the action of the wash, about which we heard so much beforehand. So far as my own observation went—an observation, I may add, which was confirmed by other passengers on our boat, who, like myself, had traversed the Canal on the 17th—the banks looked harder and firmer than they did then. That they should be so is only the exact confirmation of what M. de Lesseps has all along declared would be the case. According to his theory, the effect of water upon sand is to bind it together; and therefore, as large portions of the Canal banks above water-level have now been exposed for some three weeks to the wash of the wave caused by the passage of large steamers, they ought naturally to be more solid than they were. To the best of my observation, they are so in fact as well as in theory.

Lake Timsah looked strangely forlorn and desolate as I recalled the aspect it bore when I had last seen it. The only ship upon its lonely waters was a Spanish man-of-war conveying troops to the Philippine Islands, which had halted for a couple of days at Ismailia to take in water. The *Danube* had gone straight through, and the *Hertha*, a Prussian frigate, had also left on the previous day, and had been got over the rock at Serapeum after her draught of water had been lessened by the removal of her heavy guns. I found on inquiry that no transit service of any kind had yet been organized between Ismailia and Suez, and that, in order to reach the Red Sea by the Canal, I should have to wait till a vessel arrived from Port Saïd, as no ship was expected for two or three days; and, as I was assured by persons who had recently made the journey from Suez that there was the same complete cessation of work which I had noticed in the lower half of the Canal, I resolved to prosecute my journey by land.

Thus, as a matter of fact, the works are now at a standstill. That they were so, I needed no telling after what I had seen; but, having had the pleasure of meeting M. de Lesseps again during my passage through Ismailia, I was assured by him that the works, in his opinion, are com-

pleted. Whether deliberate choice, or considerations of policy, or financial reasons have led to the determination on the part of the company to regard the Canal as finished, I do not pretend to say. All I know is, that this determination is not arrived at. Nor am I prepared to say that it has been justified by facts. But for the obstruction caused by the sunken rock at Serapeum, ships drawing twenty-two feet could now pass without difficulty from sea to sea. This obstruction has hitherto been partially surmounted, as in the case of the *Hertha*, by the process of lightening the vessels drawing above seventeen feet by the removal of portions of their cargo. But this process has to be conducted at the cost of the company, and is inconvenient and expensive. The removal of the rock is a matter of urgent necessity; and though, so far as I could learn, very little has been done towards deepening the channel at Serapeum since the opening, I believe this delay has been solely occasioned by the fact that additional blasting apparatus has had to be sent for from Europe, and has but just arrived, if indeed, a fact of which I am not quite certain, it actually has arrived. Still, when once the work has been begun in earnest, no very long time—a couple of months at most—will be required before the rocky bed has been lowered to

the level of the rest of the Canal—that is, to an average depth of twenty-two to twenty-five feet.

No doubt, even when this is done, there will, as I have stated in my previous letters, be much to do before the Canal can be regarded as absolutely completed. To cite a few of the chief improvements required, the pier breakwaters at Port Saïd will have to be converted from open stonework into solid masonry; portions of the sandbanks between Lakes Ballah and Timsah will require coating with stone; the twisted course of the channel at El Ghisr will need straightening; and the exit from Lake Timsah, southwards, must be deepened and widened. These various improvements are calculated to cost two millions sterling. All estimates of this kind are extremely unreliable: and all you can say with any certainty is that, before these alterations are effected, the exchequer of the company will have to be replenished. How this is to be done is a question I have no means of answering. Financial authorities at Alexandria and Cairo assert that the main object of all the recent festivities is to facilitate the negotiation of a large loan in the European money-markets, and that the public will very shortly be invited to invest their funds in the Suez Canal, in the form of debentures or preference stock, or in the shares of a new

company of liquidation. These same authorities, however, have been so uniformly and persistently hostile to the scheme from its commencement, that their statements must be received with distrust; and I own that, if the intention of the company were to resume their works as soon as funds could be raised for their prosecution, it seems to me incredible they should be shipping away their working plant. Under these circumstances, I am disposed to accept the assurance given me on the spot by the management of the Canal as being given in good faith. The Canal—so the official statement runs—is now practically completed. The works are not to be prosecuted—with the solitary exception of the blastings at Serapeum—because there is no present necessity for their prosecution: and, in consequence, no further loan is required for the time being. Whenever the obstruction at Serapeum is removed, the Canal will derive a large income from its transit dues, and out of the income thus raised all future outlay can be defrayed.

This official view is unquestionably rose-coloured; and my experience of financial embarrassments, public and private, has led me to be sceptical about all assertions that no further advances will be required. Still, it is on the cards that the Canal may soon be in receipt of a very

large income from its legitimate working; and, if so, the official statement will not fall far short of the truth. The whole question turns upon the amount of traffic which will pass through the Canal. Down to the end of last month, one hundred and thirty vessels, with a gross burthen of 80,000 tons, had passed from sea to sea. Of this number, however, close upon a hundred must have belonged, directly or indirectly, to the Inaugural Squadron—each vessel of which, by the way, having made the voyage both up and down, counts for two in the tally; and the remainder must fairly be considered as vessels sent on experimental trips, not as ships engaged in ordinary trade. The truth is, that there has not been time for the traffic returns to be tested with any accuracy. The chief European harbours are many days' sail from Port Saïd; and even supposing that the shippers of England, France, Holland, and Germany had chartered and freighted vessels for India—*vid* the Isthmus—immediately upon receipt of the telegrams announcing the opening of the Canal, there would barely be time for the pioneers of the commercial fleet to have reached Port Saïd. There has been as yet no rush upon the Canal; but then it is scarcely possible that such a rush should have taken place. I heard great complaints from the Canal authorities of the temporary injury

inflicted on its prospects by the refusal of Lloyd's to insure ships on the Red Sea at any premium. I hardly imagine that the statement can be literally true. If it is, I should strongly advise English underwriters to reconsider a decision which can only eventuate in diverting the business of maritime insurance into the hands of more enterprising traders. No opposition, however influential, can hinder the Suez Canal route from being the sea highway between Europe and India. Only the other day I read an article, bristling with statistics, in an English financial organ, the object of which was to prove that, for a variety of ingenious reasons, the trade to India would still be carried round the Cape. I was reminded of an old pamphlet, written at the time when the Manchester and Liverpool Railway was in course of construction, wherein it was shown, by incontrovertible figures, that though, theoretically, there might be a slight saving of time in going from Manchester to Liverpool by railroad, yet, practically, the public would find it shorter to go by coach. The one answer to all objections as to the eligibility of the Suez Canal is contained in the simple fact that the distance from London or Liverpool to Bombay by this route, as compared with that by the Cape, is some five thousand miles less out of ten thou-

sand. Keep this fact well in mind, and you will have no doubt as to the truth of the assertion I have often made before, and now repeat for the last time, that the whole course of trade between East and West has been revolutionized by the piercing of the Isthmus.

THE KHEDIVEH.

CAIRO, *December* 16.

WHAT is the exact status of the Khediveh is a question which puzzles all diplomatic experts to solve. If, however, you have resided for any time within his dominions, you have no practical difficulty as to defining his position. As regards the Sultan, he may be a mere vassal; though I confess the Porte would, in my opinion, find extreme difficulty in acting upon the vassalage theory; but, as regards Egypt, he is *de facto*, if not *de jure*, the supreme lord and master. Some weeks ago it was currently reported that the Padishah intended to be present at the opening of the Canal; the idea of the Sultan's visit could have obtained credence only with persons ignorant of the true state of the relations between Turkey and Egypt. The Sultan might of course come here as a conqueror if he resolved to depose the Khediveh, and was able to carry out his resolution; but he could no more come to Egypt in any other capacity than that of

guest, while Ismail Pacha remains Khediveh, than Victor Emmanuel, who till lately had upon his coins the superscription of "Rè di Gerusalemme," could visit Judea as the reigning monarch. Opinions may differ, and do differ widely, as to the reforms which the Khediveh has introduced under his reign. Still, the broad fact cannot be questioned that, whether successfully or unsuccessfully, he has made an attempt to introduce into the East the civilization of the West. The effort, laudable or otherwise, places him at once above the ordinary level of Eastern rulers; and no person who has noted the extraordinary development of civilization now going on in Egypt can help feeling a deep interest in the ruler to whom this development is mainly due. It was my wish, therefore, before terminating my Egyptian tour, to have an opportunity of being presented to his Highness. My wish was responded to, as soon as expressed, with the uniform courtesy which I have received throughout my sojourn in this country; and this morning I had the honour of being presented to the Viceroy.

Eleven o'clock in the morning was the hour fixed for my reception. The Khediveh always receives visitors at that hour at the Palace of El-Eb-Din; and as he is, to a great extent, his own Prime Minister, the antechambers

were filled with numbers of Pachas, officials, contractors, engineers, and purveyors, who all had business of various kinds to transact with his Highness. Nothing could be simpler than the ceremonial observed at the palace. You drove up into a sort of stable-yard, crowded with carriages, and then picked your way through a number of outhouses to a doorway where a sentry was stationed. Passing him, you entered a bare room, lined with divans, where a number of gentlemen in uniform or evening dress were smoking cigarettes; and, after giving your card to one of the officials of the Court, you took your seat among the crowd. There was some little delay, caused by the Consul-General of Sweden having chosen that morning to present his credentials; and I was informed by the official who took up my card that it was doubtful whether the Viceroy would be able to hold any private reception. However, in a short time my introducer returned, and took me into an inner room almost as bare as the previous one, where the elect of the visitors whom the Khediveh had announced his wish to see were collected. Possibly the preference shown to me may have been due to the fact that, unlike nine-tenths of the persons who sought an audience, I had nothing, and was known to have nothing, to ask from the Viceroy. It is certain that I

was called out of my turn, and was led up a handsome flight of stairs into a long low room, as bare of furniture as the others I had seen, but surrounded with richly-hung divans, upon one of which the Khediveh was seated. The officer who introduced me asked me whether we should need an interpreter, as his Highness spoke French only, and, on my assuring him that I could dispense with the services of a dragoman in this instance, I was left alone with the Viceroy. The month being Ramadan, his Highness, contrary to his usual custom, was not smoking. He requested me to be seated, and then conversed with me in French for about half an hour on the state of Egypt and her relations with Turkey. For many reasons, I should not be justified in repeating the purport of this conversation. All I can say is, that, without having, so far as I can judge of myself, any disposition to think too much of exalted personages, I quitted his Highness with the conviction that I had been talking with a man of singular vigour of mind and clearness of expression, and this intellectual power is more marked because it is not set forth by any peculiar grace of person. Ismail Pacha is very short in stature, and his lack of inches is the more apparent from the vast breadth of his chest and shoulders. There is nothing about him of the oval face, the almond-

shaped eyes, the sharp, clear-cut features which seem to me the characteristics of the Arab race. Indeed, the only noteworthy features about his plain, shrewd face are the size of his brown, bushy, stubbly beard, his deep sunk eyes, underlined with wrinkles, and his broad, massive forehead. A certain air of self-possession and dignity is so common to all Orientals that you can hardly lay much stress on its possession by the Khediveh. What I should notice rather was that, together with this peculiarly Oriental quality, he has an animation and liveliness of manner which I, for my part, have never yet met with in any native-born Turk. It would, of course, be absurd for me, on the strength of one interview, to lay down any positive opinion as to the character of the Khediveh. That he has the outward bearing of a high-bred, courteous, and intelligent gentleman, is a fact for which I can vouch. More than this I am not in a position to say from any observation of my own; and if you are to form your opinion of the Khediveh from hearsay, you will find your authorities contradict themselves more flagrantly — and that is saying a good deal—than they do about other Egyptian topics. I have heard him abused and praised by equally well-informed persons for utterly inconsistent and incompatible qualities. The only plausible explana-

tion I have heard of these contradictory estimates was given me by an informant who had known the Viceroy from a child, and who, from his exceptional position, had little to gain by either exaggerating or decrying the merits of the Khediveh. My informant assured me that he had never known an instance of a man whose character had developed and strengthened so late in life as that of Ismail Pacha. Like all heirs-apparent to Oriental thrones, he was compelled to withdraw himself from all active participation in public life during the reign of his predecessor; and on his accession to the Khedivate, at a mature age, he seemed to be irresolute, inconsequent, and ready to sacrifice his purpose to the gratification of his vanity or his pleasures. But, as years went by, the master instinct, if I may employ the term, of Mehemet Ali made itself manifest in Ismail, as it has done in all the descendants of the founder of Egyptian independence; and the Khediveh, like his forefathers, has grown clear of head and strong of will, knowing his own purpose, and determined to carry out that purpose to the end.

Whether this explanation is founded upon fact I do not pretend to determine. It comes to me from a quarter entitled to speak with authority on such a subject; and it reconciles conflicting statements that have been made

to me by men who had no apparent interest in warping the truth one way or the other. In another letter I hope to say something on the Egyptian question. But it may be as well to give you here the opinions entertained on the subject by the Egyptian authorities. The following statement made to me recently may be regarded as an official explanation of the question between the Porte and the Sultan, as seen from the Cairene point of view.

There is still much to be done in Egypt; but the foundations of a real civilization are already firmly established. The internal difficulties of the situation are not formidable, the religious fanaticism of the Mussulman population in Egypt being now substantially subdued. With regard to external difficulties, the one permanent source of the dissensions between Egypt and Turkey is the superior progress in civilization made by the former Power. The civilization of Egypt is not part and parcel of the general progress of the East. On the contrary, whatever progress has been made in the East is due to the initiative of Egypt. In canals, schools, railroads, religious toleration, hospitals, engineering works, military organization, the formation of a fleet, postal service, the codification of the laws, and so on, the reform has invariably

been first set on foot in Egypt by Mehemet Ali or his successors, and subsequently introduced into Turkey in an imperfect form.

Even the organization of the Turkish army was mainly due to the war waged by the Porte with Mehemet Ali in Syria, as, when Turkey was replaced in possession of Palestine by the intervention of the great Powers, she found it necessary to create an army for herself based upon the system initiated by the Pacha of Egypt. The aim of Mehemet Ali, a man of extraordinary genius, was not to spread the triumph of Islam, but to modify Islam by the influence of Western civilization. The Sultans, by the necessity of their position and training, are incapacitated from governing in accordance with the principles of modern progress. They are brought up amidst the worst surroundings; they are ignorant to an inconceivable degree; they are utterly unacquainted with the condition of their people or of their own dominions. Their Ministers, by the etiquette of the Seraglio, are not allowed to communicate with them directly. The only source from which they derive any information is the Grand Vizier, who occasionally is a man of real ability, but who, even in that event, is precluded by considerations of precedence or by Court intrigues from exercising

his ability to any adequate advantage. There is no ground to hope for any valid improvement in the rule of the Porte, for the heirs of the Sultan are subjected to the same degrading influences as the Sovereign, and even to a greater extent. The only possibility of improvement lies in a radical change of the whole system under which the Sultan exercises his authority; but such a change is not upon the cards, the attitude of the Sultan towards civilization being the necessary consequence of the position he occupies as Commander of the Faithful. The Sultan has no *raison d'être* whatever, except as the champion of Islam. If he ceased to be the head of the Mussulman faith, the chief of the Mollahs, the patron of the Dervishes, he would be literally nobody. This being so, he is compelled, even against his wishes and better judgment, to rule in obedience to the prejudices of the Mohammedans. Mere regard for consistency and decorum precludes his being the sovereign alike of Mussulmans and of Christians. The transfer of jurisdiction from consular courts to local tribunals, on which such stress is laid by the Egyptian Government, could never be effectuated in Turkey, even supposing the great Powers to accede to the demanded reform, from the absolute impossibility of the Sultan's

placing a Mussulman and a Christian judge side by side upon the same bench to administer justice. The Egyptians have been taught a lesson in toleration since the days of the founder of the reigning dynasty. Mehemet Ali was in the habit of driving out with a European lady by his side. He set the example of associating on terms of equality with Europeans. This system has been pursued by his successors; and, through the example of their rulers, the people have gradually grown so accustomed to the spectacle of Christians and Mohammedans living together on a footing of equality, that they regard the equal treatment of both creeds as a matter of course. In a country where education is still very imperfectly diffused, it is absolutely essential that the importance of early training should be officially recognised by persons set in a high position; and for this reason the Khediveh has taken every opportunity of procuring for his children the advantages of a liberal European education. Such are the principles on which the government of Egypt is conducted. On the other hand, it would puzzle anybody to define the exact character of the Turkish Government. It is not a constitutional monarchy, for its subjects possess no political liberty; it is not an absolute despotism, for it has not power to enforce its

own decrees. It is "a paternal government without a father."

This statement coming, as it does, from a quarter which entitles it to respect, I have given in the words, so far as I can recall them, in which it was made to me.

LAST WORDS ON EGYPT.

ON BOARD THE RIPON, *December* 18.

I HAVE just come down from Cairo, and have passed for the last time through the Delta country, where the rich green wheat-crops are now sprouting above the soil, which, when I first saw it two months ago, lay buried beneath the Nile flood. I have caught my last view of the Pyramids towering above the Desert. I have said farewell to camels and palm-trees. I have basked for the last time for many a long month to come in glorious, burning, baking heat, and I ought to be now pitching and tossing on the black, seething sea, whose breakers I can see rolling shorewards outside the port. As a matter of fact, however, we are still at anchor in the port of Alexandria, and are likely to remain here till to-morrow.

Meanwhile, the detention affords me the opportunity of writing these last words as to the Egyptian question. It may, perhaps, have seemed strange to my readers that, being on the spot, I should hitherto have said so little

concerning the dissensions between the Porte and the Khediveh, whose peaceful termination seems to nave created a good deal of unnecessary surprise in the diplomatic circles of Europe. I confess, honestly, that I have abstained from entering at any length on this subject, because I was convinced that much more was known about the state of the Turco-Egyptian negotiations at London and Paris than could possibly be known at Cairo. My business in the East, as I understood it, was rather to describe what I saw than to speculate on what I heard, and I regret the less that I did not communicate the political rumours with which Cairo and Alexandria were rife during the progress of the negotiations, from the simple fact that these rumours have been shown by the event to have been invariably erroneous. Moreover, I entertained throughout an unshaken conviction that war between Egypt and Turkey was not upon the cards, and that this being so, there was no probability of any absolute rupture of relations between the two Powers. You cannot have an outbreak of hostilities, where neither party is prepared to push matters to an extremity; and for very obvious reasons, even supposing that Egypt and Turkey could be sure of being allowed to fight out their own battles without any intervention of foreign Powers, neither

Sultan nor Khediveh was ready to appeal to the "ultima ratio" of war—a war whose conduct would be surrounded with immense difficulties. For Turkey to invade Egypt, either by land or sea, would be a most formidable enterprise; upon their own ground the Egyptian forces, judging from past experience, would be at least a match for any army that the Sultan could transport into the Delta. On the other hand, the Khediveh, even if successful, would gain very little by a war with his suzerain, while failure would inevitably entail his own deposition from the quasi-sovereignty he now holds in Egypt. But, as a matter of fact, both the Padishah and the Viceroy are aware that any actual outbreak of hostilities between their two countries, would afford a welcome excuse for the intervention of foreign Powers; and that if war were declared, there would at once be Russian troops upon the Danube, and a French fleet in occupation of the Suez Canal. Under these circumstances, the notion that the Porte would now send an army to invade the Delta, and force the Khediveh to submission, has always seemed to me utterly chimerical.

I perceive, however, that foreign writers on the Egyptian question are apt to assume, that the Porte has it within its power to bring the Khediveh to terms by the threat of

deposition. The assumption is that the Sultan, as head of Islam, exercises a sort of moral supremacy over the Mussulman population of Egypt, which no Pacha can afford to resist. As to all questions of sentiment it is most difficult to speak confidently; all I can say is, that residents in Egypt, who are constantly in communication with the native population, ridicule the notion that the fellahs or the Bedouins attach more authority to the firman of the Sultan than to the commands of the Khediveh. The Sultan, according to Mohammedan notions, is only the Head Sheikh of the community, and his religious authority bears no kind of resemblance to that which the Pope of Rome exercises—or rather exercised—by virtue of his office. The Arabs of Tripoli and Morocco are far more fervent Mohammedans than the Egyptians; and yet the Padishah has avowedly no more power of deposing the Beys of those countries by the mere might of his moral authority, than the Tsar Nicholas had of unseating the present Emperor of the French by refusing to recognise the Empire. If the Porte were to issue a firman to-morrow, proclaiming that Ismail Pacha was thereby deprived of all authority to reign over Egypt, it would remain a mere idle menace, unless the Sultan was also prepared to depose the Khediveh by force of arms. Far from the fellahs' looking on the

Soldan of Turkey as their natural lord and protector, they distrust him as the representative of their Turkish rulers, and the Khediveh would only gain in popularity with his native subjects, by anything which dissevered his cause from that of the foreign Turkish interest.

Such, at any rate, is the opinion of men who are practically acquainted with the Egyptians, and there is such an obvious absence of fanatic zeal among the Moslem population of the Delta, that I find it difficult to imagine that the mere withdrawal of the Sultan's sanction could materially impair the authority of Ismail Pacha or his successors. I have frequently seen allusions in foreign newspapers to the possibility, that by some Court intrigue or palace conspiracy the Khediveh—in case he refused to come to terms with the Porte—might be deposed in favour of some more pliant member of his family. If these allusions mean anything, they point to some dark deed like that which cut short the reign of Abbas Pacha; but, though such a solution of the Egyptian difficulty is not out of harmony with the traditions of Oriental statecraft, it is not in keeping with the modern policy of the Porte, while the bare suspicion of foul play would be as perilous to its authors as the reality would be to its victims. Moreover, to take the lowest ground, the mere transfer of the Khedi-

vate from one Pacha to another, would be of no advantage to the Porte. If Ismail Pacha could be gathered to his fathers, if the law of succession could be instantly set aside, and if Mustapha Pacha, the exiled brother of the Viceroy, and the bitterest of his personal enemies, could be placed upon the throne in his stead, the new Khediveh would, by a necessity of his position, be as jealous of his suzerain as his predecessor. The quarrel between Turkey and Egypt is not one between two rival dynasties, but between two different stages of civilization.

In saying this, I have no desire whatever to put myself forward as an apologist of the Egyptian dynasty. I have always believed that of all forms of government, that of native Oriental princes was well-nigh the worst, both in practice and theory; and what I have seen of the condition of Egypt has confirmed my profound disbelief in the merits of Oriental despotism as a system of government. But, failing a foreign protectorate, there is no possibility of Egypt's being governed by any other system than that of an autocratic *régime;* and if this be once granted, it is difficult to see how Egypt could be better off under any other dynasty than that of Mehemet Ali. There is one form of government, and only one, which is much worse than that of a native Oriental prince, and that is, the rule of a

Pacha holding office at the goodwill and favour of an Oriental despot. Had it not been for Mehemet Ali, Egypt would be governed—as Palestine and the other outlying provinces of the Ottoman Empire are governed to the present day—by a series of Pachas, whose one object is to keep in favour with the authorities at Stamboul, and to make as much money as possible out of their Pachalik. When once the Pachalik of Egypt had become hereditary, the Pachas had a direct personal interest in the permanent welfare of their dominions, and the regeneration of Egypt dates from the time when Mehemet Ali secured the quasi-independence of his territory from Turkish rule. Another great step has been made by the concession purchased from the Porte by the present Viceroy, by virtue of which the Khedivate descends to the eldest son. Under the old Mohammedan rule of succession, by which the Khediveh was succeeded by his eldest male relative, the first object of each ruler was to amass a fortune for his children; now, however, that the eldest son is heir to the Khedivate, the interests of the dynasty and of the family have become identical. Hitherto the Pachas of Egypt have all been men of more than average ability, but even if this were not to be the case hereafter, the desire to aggrandize a kingdom, the succession to which is reserved

to their sons and heirs, is an instinct common to the most indolent and ignorant of rulers. Already Egypt has attained a degree of civilization under her Khedivehs to which no other part of Turkey can show any parallel. The Suez Canal is only the greatest of a long series of improvements that have altered the face of the country; and the permanence of these improvements is ensured by the fact, that the policy of Mehemet Ali and his successors has introduced a powerful foreign resident element into Egypt. It may very reasonably be questioned, whether the daily increasing power and influence of this element is not fraught with danger to the independent existence of the land. The old fable of the horse who got the man to mount upon his back, to enable him to get the better of the stag, is inevitably recalled to an impartial spectator's mind, as he notices how Egypt is strengthening herself, and developing her resources, under the guidance of French and English settlers; but for the time being, the amalgamation that the Khediveh has brought to pass between the rival civilizations of the East and the West has placed Egypt far ahead of other independent Oriental States.

To what extent the native population has gained by the reforms which the Khediveh has introduced is a point on

which it is very hard to obtain any trustworthy information. Still, as a matter of fact, I cannot doubt that the railroads, factories, canals, schools, and other improvements to be found in Egypt, and not in Turkey, must tend to elevate the moral as well as the material condition of the fellah. And, contrary to the opinion of many travellers, I do not believe the condition of the fellah under the rule of Ismail Pacha to be *relatively* a very bad one. Twelve centuries ago, when Amrou conquered the Delta in the name of Islam, he wrote to the Caliph Omar, saying that the people of Egypt were eminently easy to govern, because, from time immemorial, they had been used to seeing the fruit of their labour confiscated to the use of their masters. What was true in the days of Omar is scarcely less true in those of Ismail Pacha. Still, there are signs that a better era is coming for the fellahs. For the first time since the reign of the Pharaohs, Egypt is ruled by a native dynasty. With a view to liberating themselves from the tutelage of Turkey, the Khedivehs are compelled to favour the development of an Egyptian nationality; and while the Viceroy rules his country with the advice of native statesmen, and the support of a native army, the condition of his people can hardly be so hopeless as it was while the Pachas were surrounded by Turks, and

relied on the power of Turkey for the maintenance of their authority in Egypt.

The severance of Egypt from Turkey is only a question of time; but, in the interest of the reigning dynasty, I believe nothing can be better for Egypt than the maintenance of the *status quo* between Turkey and Egypt. It is true that, including direct tribute and indirect largesses, Egypt pays a million a year to Turkey, or one-seventh part of her annual income, for the honour of calling the Sultan Suzerain. On the other hand, the protection of the Porte, onerous as it may be to the fellah, is of real value to the Khediveh, as a safeguard against the encroachments of the Western Powers. The motives which induce England and France to uphold the integrity of the Ottoman Empire cause these Powers to respect the independence of Egypt so long as it forms part of the Turkish dominions. This fact is so patent that it is recognised by the statesmen of the Egyptian Government, and is acted upon, even if reluctantly, by the Khediveh himself.

Under these circumstances, I attach little importance to the concessions which the Viceroy has made to the Porte in order to avoid an open rupture. I have seen enough already of Egypt to feel convinced that while the Viceroy's credit remains good he will find no difficulty in

raising money, no matter what formal restrictions may impede his borrowing without the sanction of the Sultan. But, indeed, anything which restricts the borrowing faculties of the Khediveh can only redound to his advantage. Egypt already enjoys virtual independence; and the one real danger which threatens her retention of the rights she has acquired is the embarrassment in which her finances have been placed by the extravagance of the Khediveh's Government. Retrenchment ought to be her state policy; and, given an equilibrium between the Khediveh's expenditure and her incomings, he can afford to wait for an opportunity for the acquisition of her nominal independence—an opportunity the approach of which is daily brought nearer and nearer by the overwhelming financial difficulties of the Ottoman Empire. Peace abroad and economy at home are the principles which ought to direct the policy of Egypt, and which for the present are happily in the ascendant in the councils of Cairo.

With these remarks, I must bring my survey of Egyptian affairs to a close. The solution of a great problem is in progress upon the Delta; and it is far too early to assume that it will be successfully accomplished. Still, all who have witnessed Egypt under the same circum-

stances as myself, cannot but feel a deep interest in the fortunes of the strange Nile-watered land, on whose low sandy shores I am now looking for the last time. And if in these letters I have conveyed to the readers who have followed me from the Danube to the Nile, some share of the interest excited in my mind by the scenes through which I have passed, I, for my part, shall be content.

THE END.

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